The Path of Governance Transformation in Ethiopian Higher Education

Institutional Perspective

A Tale of Three Universities Experience with Respect to Business Process Reengineering (BPR) Reform

Behailu Aschalew

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

European Master in Higher Education (HEEM)

Department of Educational Research

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Abstract

Within the frame of contemporary reform rhetoric, the Ethiopian government has recently embarked on comprehensive structural reorganization of all public institutions under the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) program. Nevertheless, the orientation it followed in implementing the reform is quite different from the top-down approach it had traditionally been pursuing. Instead of arriving at a set of centrally predetermined reform plans, it pursued atomistic approach in which individual institutions are given autonomy to implement their own reform. Being public institution, the country's universities have implemented this reform since the mid 2000's. Drawing on the experience of three universities i.e. Addis Ababa University (AAU), Hawassa University (HU) and Mekele University (MU), this study set out to assess how the universities' academic governance and management process is affected by this reform initiative. In doing so, it also tries to reflect on whether the presence of autonomy leads to increasing or decreasing level of structural diversity in the context of developing world. In conceptualizing the universities organizational response, the environment-organization relationship embedded in the neo-institutional and resource dependency approaches is used as a basic analytical point of departure. The analysis of the universities' new structures indicated a common departure from collective to strong executive leadership ideals in all the three universities though modest institutional dissimilarity is found. No matter how limited its role deemed to be, the government is found to have played circuitously decisive role in shaping the universities response. However, the empirical functioning of the structures as perceived by sampled academic leaders and staffs revealed that governmental inducements have not so far proved to be capable of generating the desired change practically.

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Table of Contents

Abstract IV
Acknowledgement V
Table of Contents VI
List of Figures VIII
List of Tables IX
List of Abbreviations X
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background of the study 1
1.2 Research Question 3
1.2.1 Problem Statement 3
1.2.2 Specific Research Questions 4
1.3 Objectives of the study 4
1.4 Scope of the study 5
1.5 Significance of the study 6
1.6 Research approach and methodology 6
1.6.1 Research design 6
1.6.2 Sample and sampling technique 7
1.6.3 Data gathering methods and analysis procedure 8
1.6.4 Reliability and Validity of the study 10
1.6.5 Limitation of the study 11
1.7 Organization of the study 12
2 Setting the Context 13
2.1 Higher Education in Ethiopia – Past and Present 13
2.2 Target Universities 16
2.2.1 Addis Ababa University 16
2.2.2 Mekele University 18
2.2.3 Hawassa University 20
3 Analytical Framework 22
3.1 Conceptualizing Ethiopian universities organizational response to the BPR reform 22
3.2 Ambivalence in decentralized implementation 27
3.3 Organizational strategies to deal with environmental pressure 28

3.4 Conceptualizing Institutional Governance in HE - Towards an Interpretative Framework 31
4 Analysis and Discussion 41
4.1 Institutional governance in Ethiopian HEIs before BPR reform 41
4.2 Institutional governance in Ethiopian HEIs after BPR reform 48
4.2.1 Governance Arrangement at Institution Level 48
4.2.2 Governance Arrangement at Academic Unit Level 54
4.2.3 Autonomy and Patterns of Power Distribution in Academic Units 61
4.2.4 Staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes 67
4.2.5 Status of change in the universities 80
4.3 Reflection on the Organizational Response of the Universities 82
4.4 Reflection on the Universities Institutional Governance – where is it projected to? 85
5 Conclusionary Remark 94
List of References 97
Appendixes 107
Appendix A – Additional Tables to Data Analysis 107
Appendix B – Organizational Structure of target Universities 114
Appendix C – Structure of Ethiopian Education System 120
Appendix D - Interview Guide and Questionnaire 122
Appendix F – Support Letter 127

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Environmental pressure and organizational response 26

Figure 2 - Visions of university governance and organization by Olsen (2007) 33

Figure 3 - Institutional level Organizational Structure of Haile Selassie I University.....42

Figure 4 - Middle and lower level structure of a university setting before BPR reform 43

Figure 5 - Ethiopian universities' formal framework before BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization and governance....45

Figure 6 - Practical account of Ethiopian Universities' internal dynamics before BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) four visions of university organization and governance 47

Figure 7 - Prototype structure of institution level organization of a university after BPR.49

Figure 8 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement 56

Figure 9 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new HU organizational arrangement 57

Figure 10 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new MU organizational arrangement 57

Figure 11 - Prototype of a Faculty/School Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement 59

Figure 12 - Prototype of School structure in the new HU and MU organizational arrangement 60

Figure 13 - Changing power in Ethiopian HEIs hierarchal levels after BPR initiative 86

Figure 14 - Review of Ethiopian universities' formal arrangement after the BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization and governance.....88

Figure 15 - Practical account of governance in Ethiopian universities after the BPR initiative as delineated by Oslen's (2007) visions of university organization .91

List of Tables

Table 1 - Oliver's (1991) typology of strategic response 29

Table 2 - Opinion of academic staff with respect to responsiveness, participatory and flexibility of institutional level governance in their university's new system in comparison to the previous system 53

Table 3 - Academic staffs' perception towards the level of centralization/decentralization in their respective university academic wing.....65

Table 4 - Perception of academic staffs on the essence of reform.....68

Table 5 - Perception of academic staffs on their participation in the reform initiative in their respective university.....69

Table 6 - Staffs' perception regarding their relationship with academic leaders in their respective institution.....75

Table 7 - Academic staff's perceptions towards structural provisions for staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes in target universities 77

Table 8– Staff's perception regarding leadership practice in their university 78

Table 9 - Opinion of academic staff with respect to responsiveness, participatory and flexibility of school level governance in their university's new system 78

Table 10 - Staffs' perception regarding the level of their influence on institutional management and academic decision-making processes in their respective universities 79

Table 11 - Staff's perception regarding the level of change in their respective university 81

List of Abbreviations

AAU – Addis Ababa University

AC – Academic Council

BPR – Business Process Reengineering

CHE – Center for Higher Education

DC – Department Council

ETP - Education and Training Policy

HE – Higher Education

HEIs – Higher Education Institutions

HEP – Higher Education Proclamation

HERQA – Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

HESC – Higher Education Strategy Center

HU – Hawassa University

MU – Mekele University

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The overthrow of Ethiopia's Marxist military government in 1991 coupled with the international collapse of communism brought the infusion of market oriented ideology to the country. This coupled with the global rise of neo-liberalism necessitated a nationwide structural and institutional reform. In line with this, since its ascendancy to power, the incumbent government has been undertaking a wide variety of reforms aimed at realigning the country's social, political and economic institutions to fit to the new milieu. Spanning over three phases (1991-1995, 1996–2000 and 2001 onwards), the reform agenda revolves around not only redefining the role of institutions but also laying down the basis for new forms of organization, governance and steering (Mengesha and Common 2007). As part of this deliberation, the country's higher education (HE) sector has been entangling with fundamental reorganizations ranging from redefining governance and curriculum to revitalizing individual institutions over the past two decades (see Saint 2004, Yizengaw 2003).

Even though these endeavors brought remarkable change at macro level, the changes are found to be far from being realized at meso level, among other things, due to the resistance of the academic community to change (HESO 2004, Yizengaw 2003). According to Yizengaw (2003), the top-down elitist approach of implementing reforms in the universities before anyone discusses what they are meant for is one of the major reasons. Moreover, the first reforms in the early days of the new government were motivated to bring the country's institutions under the functional needs of incumbent politicians (Clapham 1995 in Mengesha and Common 2007). Eventually, the first waves of reforms were caught in the ambush of systematic resistance by the academic community. As a consequence, except for the minor changes realized either as complimentary or incremental to the existing system, the universities' internal dynamics remained more or less intact (Yizengaw 2003, HESO 2004).

However, with the decision of the government to launch a nationwide fundamental restructuring, a new wave of reform movement has regained momentum recently. In the

early 2000's, the government has examined the status of ongoing reforms in consultation with IMF and World Bank. In the assessment, the country's bureaucracy has been found to be the most impeding and bottlenecking. The extremely hierarchical non-value adding levels and input-oriented systems in the country's public institutions are signaled out as prime cause for lack of transparency, accountability, effective leadership and thereby high level of nepotism and corruption. To this end, with the ambition of realizing system overhaul, the government has embarked since the year 2002 on a comprehensive structural reorganization of all public institutions under the Business Process Reengineering program (BPR). Being public institution, universities in Ethiopia have implemented this reform since the mid 2000's.

Nevertheless, the orientation the government pursued in implementing the new reform is quite different from the top-down approach it had traditionally been pursuing. Instead of arriving at a set of centrally predetermined reform plans, its approach to the BPR reform is based on an atomistic theme in which the restructuring of an institution is assumed to relate to the sector's nature and an individual institution's contextual reality. Thus, the government adopted a federalized approach in which authority is shared between the government, whose role is limited to coordinating the overall reform process at arm's-length, and the individual public institutions, which are granted autonomy to implement their own reform. Even though not intentionally developed for the sector, this approach goes hand in glove with HE's contemporary metaphor in which independent decisions by individual institutions is assumed to produce better results than is possible through central planning. In view of this, this study is geared to see how higher education institutions (HEIs)[1] in Ethiopia restructured their governance and management system in response to this BPR reform.

[1] According to the 2009 proclamation (HEP 2009), HEI in Ethiopia is defined as an institution offering Bachelors degree and above programs. Hence, it excludes institutions offering technical and vocational programs.

1.2 Research Question

1.2.1 Problem Statement

In order to address persistent problems of inefficiency, ineffectiveness and non-responsiveness in delivering organizational services, BPR proposes a fundamental and radical shift in organizational logics from task-based to process-based thinking (see Davenport & Short 1990, Hammers 1990, Hammers & Champy 1993). It aims at finding new ways of organizing tasks, structures, positions and people in organizational settings according to process thinking instead of the traditional task-based logic so that an institution's operation would be altered not incrementally but radically. Hence, its implementation in Ethiopian universities casts question as to how the universities governance and management system is transformed in response to the reform initiative.

However, as stressed in the background section, instead of arriving at a set of fixed reform plans, the government's approach to this reform is that individual institutions are given the mandate to implement their own reform within the scope of national guidelines. The implicit assumption behind this approach is that even if each institution is supposed to carry out the BPR implementation independently, the reform would lead institutions to be effective, efficient and responsive to the society's socio-economic requirements as long as each institution adheres to the national guidelines. However, by its very nature, such approach is so decentralized that it gives local actors room to maneuver as per their own interests and local context. Even though it provides a mechanism to inculcate locally important realities, efforts to introduce such approaches in HE are reported to have resulted in divergent and partly contradictory arrangements (Maassen & Stensaker 2003). This sets the ground not only for wondering how the universities are restructured, but also examining whether the overall reform will lead to structural homogenization or heterogenization across the universities. In line with this, the overall research problem driving this study is formulated as follows:

- How have Ethiopian universities restructured their internal governance in response to the BPR reform?

1.2.2 Specific Research Questions

To address the overall research problem, the following specific questions are used as frame of reference.

1. How did the internal governance structure of the universities change as a consequence of the BPR reform?
2. How is the organization of academic units and their autonomy affected by the implementation of the BPR reform?
3. How has the implementation of the BPR reform affected the power and role of constituents in the universities in general, and the academic leaders and academic staff in particular?
4. How has the BPR reform and its implementation by the individual universities influenced the level of structural diversity across the country's universities?

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study's objectives are twofold. Basically, it is aimed at uncovering how universities in Ethiopia are restructured in response to the BPR reform and thereby revealing the path of the transformation. In addition, the study is also meant to examine whether autonomy and local discretion lead to increasing or decreasing level of structural diversity. Empirical studies in the context of the developed world suggest a drive to convergence (see Birnbaum 1983, Rhoades 1990, Huisman 1995, Meek et al 1996, Van Vught 1996 & 2009). There is no as such empirical evidence regarding the developing world's experience except extending Altbach's (1998) center-periphery interpretation in which developing countries' HEIs are expected to follow the paths of their developed counterparts'. In this regard, since implementing the BPR reform in Ethiopia gives relative autonomy to institutions, it provides suitable ground to empirically examine the drive towards structural homogenization versus heterogenization as a function of autonomy in the context of the developing world. Thus, abreast with uncovering the path of structural transformation, this study is also meant to shade preliminary light on this issue.

1.4 Scope of the study

Over the past two decades, there have been lots of reform agenda with respect to the Ethiopian HE sector. To have broad understanding of the level and outcome of the transformation, it would have been preferable if this study had been done comprehensively. But, due to limited monetary, time and related constraints, this is not possible. Owing to this, the study is confined in specific reference to the BPR reform in the country's universities. Apart from this, as Hammer and Champy (1993) described, BPR is about bringing radical organizational transformation in the whole aspect of organizational life. This in a university setting implies change in both the academic and administrative components. The study is, however, concerned with the academic component in general and its governance and management system in particular. Therefore, it is focused on how the governance structures, distribution of authority, the mechanism and nature of decision making and the nature of relationships attached to positions and committees are transformed. Alongside this central issue, as addressed in the problem statement, the study is also aimed at examining how the level of diversity across the universities is influenced by the reform. The concept of diversity in higher education encompasses several aspects. Birnbaum 1983 (in Van Vught 2009: 1-2) has identified seven categories.

- System diversity – differences in institutional type, size and control in a given system.
- Structural diversity – institutional differences accrued in differences in the internal distribution of authority among individual institutions.
- Programmatic diversity – differences in the degree level, degree area, comprehensiveness, mission and emphasis of programmes and services provided by institutions.
- Procedural diversity - differences in the ways that teaching, research and services are provided by institutions.
- Reputational diversity – difference in the perceived differences in institutions based on status and prestige.
- Constituential diversity - differences in constituents in the institutions (students, faculty, administration, etc.)

- Values and climate diversity - differences in social environment and culture.

In view of these categories, institutional diversity as explored in this study refers to institutional differences accrued in the distribution of authority. The focus is thus on structural differences among individual HEIs in terms of their internal governance arrangements before and after the BPR reform.

1.5 Significance of the study

Though the BPR reform has been initiated some years ago, no systematic inquiry has been undertaken to see how the reform affected universities, whether there is a general trend in the reforms adopted by the universities and whether it is in line with the expectations. In view of this, this study is meant to contribute to the understanding of the reform that will be useful to policy makers, HE officers, practitioners, university leaders, academicians, and other stakeholders in the country's HE sector. Additionally, it contributes to the literature on the wave of reforms in the developing countries' HE sector. Alongside this, it will give empirical evidence regarding the drive towards structural homogenization versus heterogenization as a function of institutional autonomy and local discretion in the context of developing countries. It can also serve as an empirical basis for further research in the area.

1.6 Research approach and methodology

1.6.1 Research design

In order to comprehensively describe the issue at national level, it would be ideal if the study was designed in such a way that it would be able to show the overall picture as intensively and extensively as possible. However, as there are no previous studies conducted in reference to the issue under consideration, it would be difficult to have the ground to explore further in explanatory manner. For this reason, this study is delineated to be descriptive in its nature. Apart from this, in order to broadly describe the issue in a more credible way, data from as many universities as possible should be pooled for making comparative research possible and thereby identify divergence or convergence

trends among universities. To this effect, in the framework of this study, cross-university comparative research has been included by selecting three universities. To enhance the validity of the study, multiple data sources are used. The main source is the archive of documents in the universities and concerned governmental office in general and target universities blueprint organizational documents developed after the BPR reform in particular. This is backed up by three complementary but analytically separable data sources from each selected university namely, i.e. BPR team members, academic leaders, and academic staff.

1.6.2 Sample and sampling technique

The selection of universities and respondents in this study can be seen as two level sampling: the first - deciding which universities to include and the second, selecting respondents from the targeted universities. Regarding the first, the sample is thought to be diversified enough to reveal the general trend across the country's universities more clearly if the selection is based on the universities' historical foundation and the orientation the government customarily pursues in implementing policies in the universities. Historically, the universities' background has a pattern that makes some universities more similar than others. In this regard, with the exception of Mekele, all the country's older universities - namely Bahirdar, Haromaya, Hawassa and Jima - are originated out of the Addis Ababa University structural model as they were once integral part of this university (See the next chapter for detail). Later on, during the recent wave of expansion (since the late 2000's), these universities served in their respective region as a nucleus out of which most of the new universities emerged. In line with this, whenever the need arises such as in implementing policies, the government has often opted to cluster the universities. In this regard, there are six cluster groups – a Northern group led by Mekele University, a Northwestern group led by Bahirdar University, a Southwestern group led by Jima University, a Southern group led by Hawassa University, an Eastern group led by Haromaya University and a Central group led by Addis Ababa University. Each university is normally advised by the government to perform peer-to-peer experience sharing with other universities in its cluster. Hence, the assumption here is that if these senior universities are used as representative of their respective cluster, they will as a consequence represent the rest. But, including all the six universities is not feasible. Thus,

three out of the six, namely Hawassa, Addis Ababa and Mekele are selected as these are relatively convenient and more easily accessible to the researcher than the other three.

Regarding the selection of respondents from the targeted universities, different approaches are used according to the data source used. As far as BPR team members are concerned, preference is given to contact BPR team coordinators whenever possible as the role of members in the team is different affecting their exposure to the reform. The same goes for approaching academic leaders at the institution level as the positions they occupy enable them to have a better exposure to have a comprehensive view of the reform in their respective university. As far as selecting faculty deans and department heads is concerned, they are contacted on availability and convenience basis. When it comes to selecting academic staff, whenever possible preference is given to academic staff having more than 5 year experience as those with lower experience do not have exposure regarding the system at work before the reform, and hence, can't reflect on the newly implemented system in comparison to the previous system. Though 2 BPR coordinators, 2 academic leaders at the institution level, 3 at the faculty level, 4 at the department level and 30 academic staff at grass root level from each university were planned to be included, the actual number of respondents is reduced partly due to the high level of hesitation especially among academic leaders to take part in the study and partly due to the unavailability of desired officials. Consequently, a total of 82 academic staffs at grass root level (24, 29 and 29 from AAU, HU and MU respectively), 3 BPR team members (one from each university), 2 academic leaders at institution level (from HU and MU), 4 academic leaders at faculty level (1, 2 and 1 from AAU, HU and MU respectively) and 6 academic leaders at department level (1, 3 and 2 from AAU, HU and MU respectively) have participated.

1.6.3 Data gathering methods and analysis procedure

Different data gathering techniques were used according to the source used. As far as the archive documents are concerned, document analysis of senate legislation and organizational structure documents of the target universities before the reform is conducted for examining the previous system. In addition to this, documents and reports in connection to BPR in Ethiopia in general and the targeted universities (draft and final versions) in particular have been studied. When it comes to gathering data from members

of the BPR teams and academic leaders at all levels, in depth semi-structured interviews were employed. A close-ended questionnaire has been administered to gather data from academic staff as doing interview with this group was evidently not feasible.

Questions for the interviews and the questionnaire were developed in such a way that they reflected the indicators set up in the analytical framework (see the third chapter for the detail on the analytical framework). In this regard, related studies on institutional governance such as the International Research Project on the Academic Profession published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in particular have been referred (see Altbach 1996). The full description of the interview guide and questionnaire is provided in Appendix D. Both the interview and questionnaire were administered in 2011 summer. The interview was conducted in Ethiopia's official language Amharic and afterwards, it was transcribed in English by the researcher for the use of the study.

The analysis is organized in such a way that it provides a comprehensive review of the status quo preceding the reform initiative first and then portrays how the universities are transformed. In the first stages of the analysis, a review of the dynamics of institutional governance in Ethiopian universities before the BPR initiative has been done. In the second stage, an analysis of the three universities followed by a comparative summary of all the three universities is conducted in procedural way. In line with this, the data gained from documents is systematically reviewed and organized according to the issue it deals with. In the same way, the data gained from interviews was converted into a written form and organized, as was data collected via the questionnaire. Then, both primary and secondary data gathered for each university were pooled together. Next, a thorough examination and analysis based on the analytical framework developed for each university was conducted. After the analysis for each university was done, in the latter stage of the analysis, cross-university comparisons and contrast analysis were conducted to provide a descriptive explanation of common and contrasting patterns in the universities' newly adopted structures.

1.6.4 Reliability and Validity of the study

Though reliability and validity are prominent to a quantitative perspective, they are as much relevant to qualitative studies as well (Babbie 2007, Bryan & Teevan 2005:148). However, due to the inherent difference between the two perspectives in terms of measurement, epistemological foundation and ontological considerations, their meaning is argued to need alteration to fit the qualitative discourse (Bryan & Teevan 2005:148-151). In this regard, Lincoln and Guba (1994 in Bryan & Teevan 2005:150) proposed four qualitative research criteria – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability each of which has equivalent criterion in quantitative research - internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity respectively. These set of criteria are assumed as a point of reference to ensure this study's reliability and validity. In line with this, one way methodological triangulation that relates to the use of different data sources, i.e. primary data sources alongside secondary data, is used to enhance the credibility of the study. Each source is assumed to have a role to reflect on the issue from different angle. Data gained from BPR members is expected to highlight the rationales and assumptions for developing the new structures, whereas the data from the academic administrators and academic staff gives an internal view on the new arrangements from the top and the bottom of the organizational hierarchy respectively. An attempt is also made to augment this further by coupling the qualitative analysis with quantitative one though in a limited way. Besides, to ensure a good match between the analysis and the concept it is supposed to denote, the questions for the interview and the questionnaire were developed by referring to internationally renowned study in the area - the International Research Project on the Academic Profession by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Altbach 1996). With respect to dependability, all phases of the study ranging from methodological choice and selection of sample cases to interview transcripts and data analysis procedures have not only been clearly sorted out but also strictly followed. Hence, all respondents were presented with the same set of questions though the questions posed through interview are adjusted to fit the formal role of respondents. Though the interviews were recorded and transcribed, the fact that they were translated by a non-professional translator (the researcher himself) may pose an issue. Even so, an attempt is made to make sure that the respondents' responses are reflected as accurately as possible. Likewise, in order to enhance the transferability of the findings to other HEIs in the country, the sampled universities were selected in such a way that they are diversified and

relevant enough to represent other institutions as well. Even then, it is obvious that what holds for the sampled institutions may not be necessarily applicable to the context of other institutions especially junior ones. In this regard, Lincolin and Guba (1994 in Bryan & Teevan 2005:150) stressed the essence of providing thick description of the issue under consideration. In line with this, in this study as much care as possible is given to making the analysis as comprehensive and insightful as possible so that it would provide a database for making reasonable judgments about other universities' milieus.

1.6.5 Limitation of the study

Limitations of this study can be seen from two aspects – methodological and practical issues. In reference to the first, targeting three universities presents a very difficult situation though having as many universities as possible is desirable for the study's reliability. Even though all the three universities work under similar conditions, it does not mean that they share the same context. Each institution has its own context which in turn makes the inter-university comparison wary and complicated. This along with the generalizing nature of the study made it more descriptive. In view of this, the researcher does not want to pretend that the study would provide a comprehensive account of the universities' experience. However, conducting the study in such comparative way is thought to provide insights across the universities. Besides, though the target universities are selected in such a way that they represent other universities in the country, the omission of junior universities in the sample may limit the applicability of the conclusions drawn to all institutions.

As far as practical issues are concerned, one of the major challenges is in relation to timing. Though the researcher planned to undertake the fieldwork before the summer holiday for Ethiopian universities began, this turned out to be impossible in practice. Eventually by the time the researcher went for field survey, finding desired respondents was difficult. This was further goaded by operational intricacies related to respondents' reluctance to take part in the study. Consequently, the actual number of respondents was lower than planned. Nonetheless, effort has been made to generate sufficient data for addressing the research questions. Additionally, the researcher also came across great difficulty in getting secondary data from the respective universities due to the reservation by some officials in the respective institutions. Thus, even though sufficient data has been

gained on the focal issues, some documents were not accessed. These operational challenges along with the possible individual based bias can have a bearing on the findings of the study.

1.7 Organization of the study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter sets out the study's background and methodological approach. Chapter two presents the Ethiopian HE context within which the study is conducted. Chapter three draws on the study's analytical framework. Chapter four presents the analysis, interpretation and summery of findings. The last chapter provides conclusionary remark about the overall aspects of the study.

2 Setting the Context

Though a thorough analysis of the development of HE in Ethiopia does not serve the study's purpose, brief examination of historical patterns and present features helps to understand the dynamics of the sector in the country. With this in mind, in this chapter, an attempt is made to provide a descriptive explanation of the sector's past and present experience and the historical background of the targeted universities.

2.1 Higher Education in Ethiopia – Past and Present

Education in Ethiopia has a long history. The country has an old elite educational system linked to its Orthodox Church (MOE 2011B, Pankhurst 1986, Saint 2004: VI). Although the presence of inscriptions before the introduction of Christianity into the country shows the precedence of literacy over Christianity, the country's traditional didactic system is deeply rooted in its Orthodox Church. As early as the 4th century, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church set up a comprehensive system of education where formal education from preschool through advanced level is given on theology, philosophy, computation, civil law, canonical law, astronomy, history, poetry and music (Ajayi et al. 1996, Pankhurst 1986, Wagaw 1979).

In spite of this antiquity educational heritage, modern secular education in the country was initiated at the turn of the 20th century (Saint 2004, MEO 2011B). However, higher education was started only as recent as the 1950's with the founding of the then University College of Addis Ababa. This was followed by a stagnant establishment of a few public institutions geographically dispersed in and around major urban settlements in the late 1950's and early 1960's. In the early 1960's, all colleges in the country were reorganized and pooled together under Addis Ababa University (the then Haile Selassie I University) (Tamirat 2008, Wagaw 1990).

In its early life, Addis Ababa University along with its several colleges in various parts of the country was able to keep up with international standards with a considerable success (Saint 2004). However, due to the extreme circumcision of its autonomy by the then military junta government, this couldn't continue long. In its 1977 proclamation, the then military government established the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) through

which it micro-managed the HEIs. This centrally controlled system made change, innovation and responsiveness difficult for the HEIs. Eventually, while universities in many other countries have accomplished profound change, little or no changes to augment the changing national as well as global realities occurred in Ethiopian universities untill recent years (Yizengaw 2003:05). Owing to this, for relatively longer time, the country's higher education institutions had largely stuck to a closed system, which, in many cases, was out of touch with the country's socio-economic environment. Accordingly, as the 20th century close to drew, Ethiopia's HE system was in absolute surrender point (Saint 2004: VI).

In spite of this constraining experience, the military government made modest efforts to expand the sector. A closer look at of the detailed account of this regime's time reveals the inauguration of several junior colleges in the provinces under Addis Ababa University along with handful independent vocational institutions aimed at training middle level manpower in several fields. If anything that happened in the 1970s and 1980's deserves a mention other than this, it was the promotion of Alemaya Agricultural College to a status of specialized university and the commencement of graduate study at Addis Ababa University (see Ahmed 2006, Habtamu 2003, Wagaw 1990). Consequently, until the 1990's enrolment in HE grew modestly but it was far below acceptable levels even by Sub-Saharan standard. The tertiary gross enrolment ratio showed no sign of meaningful improvement though it grew to 0.7% in 1995 from 0.2% in 1970 (Yizengaw 2005:02). Generally, the expansion of the sector in its half a century epoch was so sluggish with Addis Ababa University and the then Alemaya Agricultural University (now Haromaya University) being the only HEIs in the country for relatively longer time (Engida 2006, Habtamu 2003, Tamirat 2008).

Over the last decade, however, fundamental changes have been taking place in the Ethiopian HE. The overthrow of the then Marxist military government in 1991 coupled with the international collapse of communism brought the infusion of market oriented ideology into the country. This eventually necessitated a country wide structural and institutional reform in all sectors. To this end, the new government devised a nation-wide deliberations aimed at transforming all public sectors. As part of this process, since the late 1990's, a series of reforms targeted at aligning the country's HE to the new scenario have been introduced (Saint 2004:85-87, Yizengaw 2003:05-13). Consequently, the

country's higher education sector was transformed fundamentally in a wide variety of areas.

The first wave of the new regime's reform agenda came to be enacted by the mid of 1990's. With the promulgation of the country's Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994, an attempt to redress the country's education system with specific deliberations at each level was made (see ETPTGE 1994). In line with this, the country's education system has been restructured radically (See Appendix C for detail). In the HE sector, this has been manifested mainly in the length and curricula content of degree programs. A good instance in point is the duration of study for a Bachelor's degree which has been reduced from 4 to 3 years with the former freshman year courses being transferred to the secondary school level. With respect to curriculum, a major review and upgrading which brought about change both in terms of content and structure has been enacted. Consequently, all existing diploma programmes were transferred to technical colleges making the universities concentrate on degree training. In a related move, new degree courses such as in civics, ethics, communication skills, community outreach, and entrepreneurship were introduced in response to the country's anticipated needs (Saint 2004).

Likewise, with the ratification of the new HE Proclamation in 2003, the governance framework within which universities operate has been fundamentally reformed. The 2003 statutory laid down legal framework in which the country's universities are granted substantial autonomy. Furthermore, it has also resulted in a shift away from fully subsidized HE to a cost recovery schemes in which students share the cost of their study. In addition to this, it has also included the legal provision for the establishment of private HEIs for the first time formally although there were private institutions preceding the proclamation. Apart from this, it also resulted in the reorganization of the concerned ministerial office in such a way that the duty of the sector's governance is entrusted to the two independent board steered public agencies: Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC) & Higher Education Relevance & Quality Agency (HERQA) (now referred to as Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA)). In general, the law fundamentally transformed the formal framework that determine the characteristics of the country's HEIs, how they relate to the whole system, how money is allocated to them and

how they are held accountable (see HEP 2003 for detail). All these provisions have been reinforced by the recently revised 2009 proclamation (see HEP 2009 for detail).

In a similar move, ambitious plan to expand the sector's intake capacity especially in public institutions was put in place. To this effect, expansion of the sector in unprecedented scale has been evidenced over the past two decades. Many of the former colleges under Addis Ababa University were upgraded to full-fledged university and a number of new ones have been established (Saint 2004, Tamirat 2008, Yizengaw 2003). All these ultimately made the country's achievements over the past decade little short of extraordinary as total enrolments have grown more than tenfold in a decade from 39,576 in 1996/97 to 467,843 in 2010/2011 with 31 public universities, 5 special universities and 58 private institutions in place of the previous two-university system (MOE 2011A & 2011C).

2.2 Target Universities

Moving forward with the BPR reform agenda, all universities in the country have conducted a complete review of their system and thereby, developed BPR reform plan intended to make their system robust enough to achieve the ambitious objectives set for the sector. As the redesigning phase neared completion, all of the HEIs in the country except few have fully implemented it. All the three targeted universities embarked on the implementation phase step by step from partial to full scale. Of the three universities, Mekele University has finalized implementing the reform at all levels and now with the ambitious move of its new expatriate president to transform the university to German Applied University model; it is gearing into another wave of reform (see Herzig 2010). In the remaining two universities, Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Hawassa University (HU), the reform process has now reached a stage where implementation of new university-wide structure is completed. The section to follow provides detailed background of each target university.

2.2.1 Addis Ababa University

The formal account of Addis Ababa University's establishment is set on the inauguration date of the then University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950. The establishment

of the college was followed by the 1954 charter that laid the institution's legal existence. According to the charter, the college was to be guided by the chancellorship of the emperor and governed by a board of his own choosing (Wagaw 1979 &1990, Habtamu 2003, Ahmed 2006). In the late 1950's, the college was complimented by the establishment of other handful independent institutions in and around the major urban settlements. In about a decade time, all the HEIs in the country were pooled together to form a national university system named after the emperor - Haile Silasie I University (HSIU) (AAU 2011, Wagaw 1979).

In the next few years, HSIU went through a lot of expansion and development processes until the demise of the emperor. During this time, a number of additional faculties were founded and continuing education division for evening program was added to the regular program. In 1974, following the overthrowing of the emperor, the university had to be once again renamed to Addis Ababa University (AAU) (Wagaw 1979). Except some minor changes, the years 1974-1977 did not mark visible change in the university mainly due to the continued civil war and political unrest. In 1977, the military government transferred the responsibility of Board of Governors to central authority called the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). This eventually marked the ultimate annul of the university's autonomy (Gemeda 2008). However, it should be acknowledge that in spite the autonomy circumcision, AAU managed to expand and diversify its academic programmes during the times of CHE. This period also marked the beginning of graduate study at Masters Level in 1979 and PhD in 1987at the university (Ahmed 2006, Gemeda 2008).

Soon after the 1991 regime change, the university was able to regain its autonomy and healthy intellectual climate. However, the sprouting of row between the university's community and the new government in the mid 1990's led to a more systematic circumcision of the university's institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Gemeda 2008, Yimam 2008). In spite of this, since the late 1990's the university achieved encouraging developments in program expansion, intake capacity, establishment of new campuses and so forth. In a related development, in the history of Ethiopian HE, the years since the late 1990's mark an all-inclusive extraordinary transformation. This is a period in which decisive measures and efforts to strengthen, upgrade and broaden the country's HEIs are undertaken. Consequently, the university's colleges that are located in different

parts of the country were upgraded to full-fledged autonomous university in their own right. This eventually marked the demise of AAU's decades old structure that stretched out to different parts of the country.

More recently, as a case in all universities in the country, the university is undergoing fundamental reform. It launched the implementation phase of its BPR initiative in 2009. The implementation phase marked the culmination of three years of planning and preparation that was started in 2007 with the development of the university's 5-year Strategic Plan. With this, the university's internal arrangements were redesigned in such a way that its structures and processes are aligned to optimize its efficiency and effectiveness to pursue the vision to be 'A pre-eminent African research university dedicated to excellence in teaching, critical inquiry, creativity and public action in an academic community that cultivates and celebrates diversity".

As it stands now, the university runs undergraduate academic programs in more than 70 academic and professional areas. Most of its colleges, faculties and institutes offer graduate programs at Masters and PHD level. According to the statistical record on its website, graduate admissions have increased by 400% over the past few years with 129 and 65 MSc and PHd programs respectively compared to 22 MSc and 5 PHd programs 20 years ago. The current total enrollment is around 50,000 with graduate enrolment of 7,127 students. According to AAU's Registrar archives, over 200,000 students have graduated in different disciplines and levels from AAU during its 60 years of existence. In the year 2011, the university graduated around 12,000 students, the highest in its history with graduate study program hitting more than 2000 for the first time (AAU 2011b).

2.2.2 Mekele University

Mekelle University is located in Mekele, the capital city of Tigray Region of Ethiopia, at a distance of 783 Kilometers north of the Ethiopian capital. It was established through the merger of Mekelle Business College and Mekelle University College in May 2000 in accordance with the decree of Government of Ethiopia Council of Ministers, Regulations No. 61/1999 of Article 3 (FDRE 1999a). Before the merger, the two colleges went through their own historical ascends and descends.

Mekelle University College (MUC) was incepted in 1993 as the Arid Zone Agricultural College after a series of voluminous relocations in different parts of the country. Originally, the college was intended to be located near Seleh Leha, in northwestern Tigray. However, for some reason, its establishment was reshuffled to Asmara University (found in present day Eritrea). After few years stay in Asmara, it was moved with Asmara University to Agarfa, Southern Ethiopia when the university was displaced by the then military government in 1990 due to the then political instability. When its hosting university relocated back to Asmara after a year spell at Agarfa, the Arid Zone Agricultural Faculty moved temporarily to another university called Haromaya (the then Alemaya). Then again, in 1993 it was relocated, this time to settle permanently in Mekele as the College of Dryland Agriculture and Natural Resources Management. With all the ups and downs, the college commenced its teaching undertaking by enrolling 42 students in three degree programs in 1993. In few years time, the college's academic scope was broadened by the establishment of the Faculty of Science, Technology, and Law (MU 2011). As opposed to MUC, Mekelle Business College has its legacy exclusively in Tigray Region. It was first founded as a school of Economics in 1987 by the then armed opposition junta (now incumbent) in one of the then liberated areas in Western Tigray – Dejena. Its core mission was to produce middle-level professionals who could assume the financial and administrative responsibilities of public offices in liberated areas during the armed struggle. Soon after the rise of EPRDF to power, the school was upgraded to a college level. It was then relocated to the city of Mekele (MU 2011).

Mekele University is among the pioneer HEIs in Ethiopia in embarking the BPR initiative. It initiated the reform early in 2007. Hence, it was able to finalize the planning phase of the reform much earlier than other universities did. To test the fruit of the effort, it prepared an integrated implementation plan that include a wide variety of intervention projects ranging from introducing new organization structures, processes and infrastructures to revising curriculum and research policies. In 2008, step by step implementation of the reform from partial to full scale was commenced and was completed later in the mid 2009. As it stands today, the university caters both undergraduate and post-graduate programs. After the implementation of BPR initiative, it reorganized its colleges in four campuses: Endayesus campus (Dry Land Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, Natural and Computational Sciences, Enginerineeg and computer sciences, and Paleoenvironment and Heritage Conservation), Adi Haki campus

(Law and Governance, Languages and Humanities, Business and Economics, Institute of Pedagogical Sciences), Aider campus (College of Health Sciences) and Kelamino campus (College of Veterinary Science). Through its School of Graduate Studies, it offers eleven postgraduate study programs. As of 2009/2010 academic year, the university hosted over 22,000 student population (35% female) in regular, evening, summer and distance education programs with nearly 1200 and 1350 academic and support staff respectively (MU 2010).

2.2.3 Hawassa University

Hawassa University (formerly Debub University) is located in Hawassa, capital city of Southern Nations Nationalities, and People's Region of Ethiopia (SNNPR) at a distance of 272 kms south of the national capital. Following the Council of Ministers Regulation No. 62/1999, it was officially inaugurated on 25th of April 2000 by consolidating three colleges: Awassa College of Agriculture, Dilla College of Teachers Education and Health, and Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources (FDRGE 1999b). At its inception, Hawassa College of Agriculture served as the nucleus of the university. From 2000 to 2006, it used to be referred to as Debub University. In 2006, Dilla College of Teachers Education and Health Science seceded from the University after it was upgraded to an autonomous university on its own right and with that, the university was renamed after its host city Hawassa. In a similar move, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources is expected to turn itself to a university college in the near future (HU 2011).

Soon after its establishment, the university undertook ambitious expansion projects both academically and organizationally. Thus, alongside improving the capacity of existing colleges, it embarked on huge expansion project with the establishment of the main campus at the periphery of the city in the early 2000's. Consequently, by the mid 2000's, it was able to achieve remarkable success in enrollment and academic program expansion well beyond expectation. In about 6 years time since its establishment, it was able to enroll nearly 15,000 students in more than 40 departments, which were organized under 3 colleges and 8 faculties, compared to less than 3000 students during its inception. As a case with other universities in the country, the university has taken initiative to undertake BPR reform in 2008. With the completion of the reform plan; the university commenced

partial implementation in 2009. The following year, the new organization structure and working system was put fully operational. After the reform, the university's colleges and faculties are reorganized into 4 institutes and 21 departments in four campuses; namely the Main Campus, College of Agriculture Campus, College of Health and Medical Sciences Campus, and Wondogenet College of Forestry and Natural Resources Campus.

Currently, it offers both undergraduate and graduate programs. The school of Graduate study, which had 31 programs in 2009/10 academic year, is expected to raise its academic programs to 40 as of 2010/11 academic year. According to the enrolment for 2010/2011 academic year, the university has more than 20,000 students in regular, evening, weekend, distance and summer programs. It has workforce composed of about 930 full time academic staff (13% female) and 1400 supportive staff (more than 45% female) (HU 2010).

3 Analytical Framework

This chapter presents the study's analytical framework. It is divided into four parts. The first part presents the conceptual perspective that underpins the study's assumptions and premises about the universities' organizational responses to the BPR reform initiative. In doing so, it provides brief discussion on the two theoretical viewpoints, neo-institutional and resource dependency, on which the framework drew and then based on the organization-environment relationship embedded in the two perspectives; it describes how the universities are positioned in the Ethiopian BPR reform process. The second part provides discussion on the ambivalence that emanates from the nature of the implementation path followed in implementing the BPR reform. In line with this, conceptual foundation for divergent and convergent trend in decentralized approach to policy implementation is provided. The third part provides discussion on the repertoire of organizational response strategies the universities have in responding to the reform initiative. The final section of the chapter conceptualizes models of institutional governance and how they are to be operationalized in the next Analysis and Discussion chapter.

3.1 Conceptualizing Ethiopian universities organizational response to the BPR reform

Organizations are generally seen as open systems with interdependent parts working jointly towards common organizational goals (Gornitzka 1999:6, Katz & Khan 1966, Scott 1998). This view of organizations is based on the assumption of entropy, the necessary dependence of any organization upon its environment (Katz & Khan 1966) and the reciprocal relationship and influences an organization has on its environment (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). In this organization-environment relationship, organizations are perceived as micro actors embedded in the larger macro-environment comprised of other organizations and institutions that exert various influences of economic, political and social nature. In the framework to be presented, this open system view is used as a basic point of departure in conceptualizing Ethiopian universities' organizational response to the implementation of BPR reform. The framework draws on two theoretical viewpoints from organizational studies – neo-institutional and resource dependency approach.

Both neo-institutional and resource dependency perspectives share an open system's basic assumption of environmental determinism as pivotal to organization actions but diverge from each other regarding the organizational capacity to react to changes in the environment (Gornitzka 1999:7, Gornitzka & Maassen 2000, Oliver 1991:146-150). Resource dependency theory begins with the assumption that organizations operate in an open space in which they not only depend on their environment for critical and scarce resources essential to their continued existence but also have control over resources needed by the environment. It thus explicates how organizations act strategically to make active choices to manage their dependencies on those parts of their environment that control critical resources. It thus focuses on structural adaptation in relation to dependencies on external environments, but is more explicit about an organization's discretion within the context of environmental constraints (Gornitzka 1999:7-9, Gornitzka & Maassen 2000, Oliver 1991:146-151, Pfeffer & Salancik 1978).

Neo-institutional approach in its part embodies how an organization's behavior is shaped beyond individual volition by socio-cultural values of institutional logics prevailing in the environment. It emphasizes the essence of social and cultural aspects in the form of institutional rules, pressure and sanction in determining organizational structure, behavior and actions (Gornitzka 1999:7-9, Gornitzka & Maassen 2000, Oliver 1991:146-151, Scott 2001, Zucker 1987). It presupposes organizations to operate in an environment dominated by rules, requirements, understandings and taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitute appropriate or acceptable organizational forms and behavior (Scott 2001, DiMaggio & Powell 1983). Organizations that match their internal structure, behavior and actions with requirements coming from their institutional environment get a return in the form of increased legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, Zucker 1987).

Scholars suggested the complementarities of the two perspectives in relating environmental determinism to organizational response (for instance, Gornitzka 1999, Gornitzka & Maassen 2000, Huisman and Meek 1999, Jongbloed, Maassen & Neave 1999, Oliver 1991). Central tenet of both perspectives is the assumption that organizational choice is limited by a variety of external pressures emanating from the collective and interconnected environment and thus, each organization's survival depends on responsiveness to external expectations. Their divergent foci reside in their supposition of the organizational capacity to react to environmental pressure and how they do it

(Gornitzka 1999:7). Scott (1998) attributed their difference to the nature of the relationship organizations have with their environment. Treating technical and institutional issues separately, he identified two sets of environments with which organizations interact. The technical/task environment comprises the sources of inputs as well as the destinations for an organization's output. Whereas institutional environment refers to the socially constructed normative worlds in which organizations operate. According to Scott, the presence of these distinct environments points to different linkage processes between an organization and its environment. Oliver (1997:700) put this linkage difference as follow:

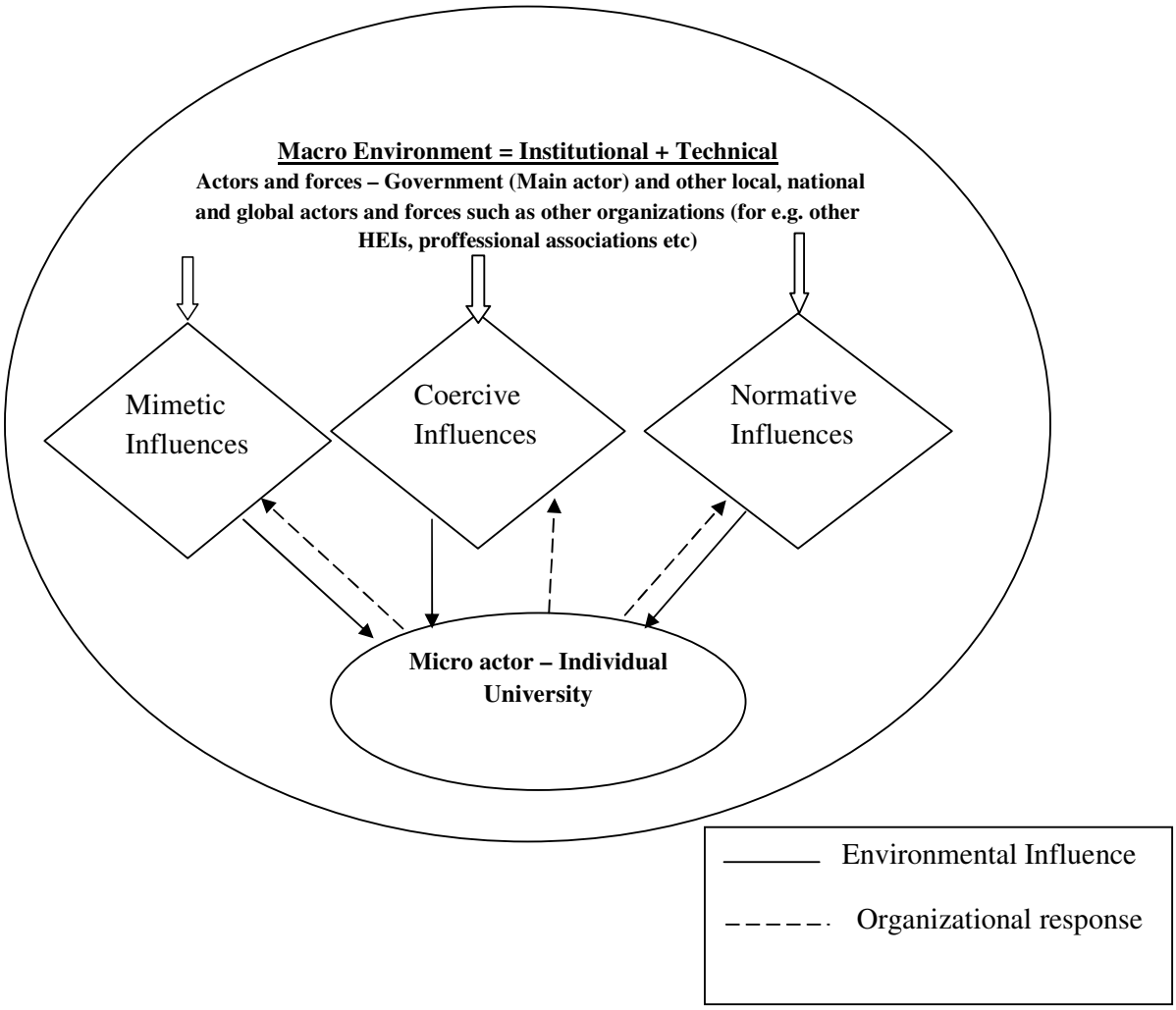
> '*According to institutional theory, firms make normatively rational choices that are shaped by the social context of the firm, whereas the resource-based view suggests that firms make economically rational choices that are shaped by the economic context of the firm*.'

In this study, the implementation of BPR in Ethiopian universities and the universities' responses to the reform are conceptualized in light with this environment-organization relationship embedded in the two perspectives. As clarified in the previous chapter, this reform agenda is initiated by the government. The government operates both in the task and institutional environment. In the institutional environment, it operates by means of its governmental agencies, rules, laws and regulatory structures and mechanisms. This does not mean that it is the sole actor. It is considered as one of the major actors in the wider socio-cultural environment. In the task environment, it is the main stakeholder acting as a source for economic resources and a grand employer of graduates and an ultimate user of the universities' services. Interpreting the two theoretical perspectives in the implementation of BPR in Ethiopian universities would thus mean that the outcome of the reform is conditioned by the extent to which the universities are subjected to pressures arising from environmental actors in general, the government in particular and the ability of individual institutions to respond to the exerted pressure. Even though the government in the Ethiopian context is the most important and dominant stakeholder pressing influence on the universities as is the case in the developing world in general, it does not mean that it exerts arbitrary pressure on all universities at the same level, neither are its influences linear in nature. Rather, the universities' responses are conditioned by a multifaceted complex network of relationships and dynamic interactions the government

has with each individual university. In this study, each individual university is assumed as having different context and level of organizational capacity to cope with external influence.

Indeed, the mechanism through which governmental influences are being exerted is of paramount importance in determining the government's leverage to influence the universities' actions. Hence, conceptualizing the universities organizational response requires a clear delineation of how the formal frameworks and structures for implementing the BPR are laid, how individual universities are positioned in the implementation process, and how the government coordinates the whole process. As elaborated elsewhere, contradictory to its long years' top-down intervention tradition, the Ethiopian government followed a federative approach in implementing the reform in such a way that each individual institution has autonomy to conduct its own organizational reformation. Conceptualizing such orientation requires departing from the traditional top-down conception of implementation. Top-down conception is too narrow in its perspective to explain such process as it concentrates only on the flow of the process from the higher level to the lower (Enders et al. 2003, Gornitzka et al. 2005). It presumes change to be an outcome of central actors' proactive action rather than an interactive and dynamic process that includes different levels and actors. This eventually makes it neglect initiatives coming from local implementing officials and street level bureaucrats. The same goes to the bottom-up perspective. Though it provides a more realistic understanding of implementation as it begins with the grass-root level, it too lacks the conceptual width to grasp reality as it is the reciprocal of the top-down's hierarchical view (Enders et al 2007). Referring to this, Berman (1978) pointed to the presence of an artificial dichotomy between the two perspectives and hence, suggested the complimentary use of both. He argued that implementation is top-down to the extent that statute and regulation constrain the power of those below but also bottom-up to the extent that street-level actors have local discretion to limit hierarchical influence. Bearing this in mind, he posited that policy implementation occurs at two levels, macro and micro. At macro-implementation level, central actors dictate a policy decision; whereas at micro-implementation level, local actors and street-level bureaucrats develop and implement their version in response to the macro plans.

Figure 1 - Environmental pressure and organizational response



This macro and micro actors' conception goes hand in glove with neo-institutional and resource dependency's environmental influence and organizational response. The macro perspective represents environmental influence and the micro perspective relates to organizational response. In line with this, in this study, I interpret the core actors in the implementation of the BPR reform in the Ethiopian HE system to be the government, its institutions and the vast array of regulatory, normative and socio-cultural influences it uses to coordinate the BPR implementation as macro level actors in the centre; and individual universities as relative autonomy to plan and implement their own system in response to the reform initiative as micro actors. The net result of the reform is thus conceived to rest neither with the micro actors – individual universities, nor with the macro actor – the government, but with the mutual adaptation process between the two.

3.2 Ambivalence in decentralized implementation

As has already been discussed, the orientation followed in implementing BPR in Ethiopian universities is based on synthesized approach in which individual institutions are given autonomy to conduct their own organizational reformation. According to Kickert (1995), the main relevance of such approach in HE is that it departs away from the traditional idea of direct government intervention in favor of local discretion with the assumption that local actors with adequate awareness of a local situation would be able to effectively, efficiently and flexibly respond to the increasing variety in societal demands. Autonomy is believed to liberate institutions from the rigidities of central actors' rational monitoring and thereby, help them better adapt to the dynamic of societal needs (Sanchez-Ferrer 1997, VanVught 1989).

However, by its very nature, such approach is so decentralized that it gives local actors room to maneuver which in turn can lead to the proliferation of divergent trends. In the context of macro-micro actors, Berman (1978) accentuated the possibilities of divergent trends to take place to the extent local actors are given the mandate for discretion. He argued that when local actors have autonomy to dictate their own choice, central actors can influence them only indirectly. This eventually paves the way for variation in how individual actors at the micro level respond to the same national policy. Clark (2000 in Meek 2003) posited a similar argumentation. He stressed that though central actors announce policies, implementation in HE lies in the hands of university level actors, which have their own trajectories. Thus, even though it provides a mechanism to inculcate locally and institutionally important realities, as it is much decentralized, less hierarchical and less clear steering strategy than theoretically thought, the introduction of such approach in the practice of HE is evidenced to have resulted in divergent and partly contradictory trends (Maassen & Stensaker 2003).

As opposed to this, Van Vught (1996 & 2009) argues that the adaptation processes universities pass through in one way or another would lead to homogenization through time as they react in response to more or less uniform environmental conditions. He argues that as universities try to adapt to the existence of and pressures by other organizations and forces in their environment, it leads to DiMaggio & Powell's (1983) constraining process of isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) reasoned out that,

acting as master bridging process in the form of coercive, mimetic and normative forces; isomorphism shapes organizations facing the same set of environmental conditions to become more homogeneous and more similar in structure over time.

Within the macro-micro actors' framework drawn for this study, this would mean that the possibility of divergent or convergent trends depends on the balance between the forces driving towards the either end. Hence, the stronger the coordinating and steering mechanisms used by the government are in comparison to the reactive capacity of individual universities, the more similar the reform outcome will be and vice-versa.

3.3 Organizational strategies to deal with environmental pressure

As explored in the above discussion, the conceptual framework mapped by the neo-institutional and dependency perspectives stressed that organizational responses are heavily shaped by pressures emanating from the institutional and task environment. This does not mean that organizations blindly conform to environmental pressures. Instead, they are active players that can proactively respond in different ways. Oliver (1991) considers organizations as capable of making strategic choices within the context of constraints imposed by their environment. In HE, institutional responses and structural compliance to policy expectation have been contended to be conditioned by the normative match of the intended reform with the academic traditions (Gornitzka 1999:10). Empirical evidence reveals how reform endeavors lacking this are handicapped in the bottom heavy HE structure (see Birnbaum 2001, Musselin 2005). Becher and Kogan (1980 in Clark 1983:183) attribute this to the fact that academic cultures, values and beliefs for the most part evolve to protect the legitimate interests of researchers and teachers. Thus, any move including those generated from within the university itself could fail if they are meant to compromise the interests of researchers and teachers. This would mean that the more the elements of the reform departed from an individual university's or sector's tradition, the higher the level of resistance to change will be.

However, the leverage a university has depends on the maturity of the university as an establishment. Clark (1983:183) put it as follows:

At the outset, a system has little culture of its own to guide interaction and change. But as it develops, it builds its own source of continuity and change. It grows larger and becomes complex, it acquires structure of work, belief and authority … Mature system compared to the emerging one is like the adult compared to the new born or young child, it has greater stability of character and hence of response, it is much less dependent than when recently emerged from the womb (the society). Thus, developed systems will be full of constraints upon change.

This points to the assumption that the less mature an organization as a system is, the higher the chances of conformity will be. In line with this contention, in this study it is assumed that the less mature a university as an establishment is, the higher is its exposure to environmental influence (in our case in particular governmental influences). And, the higher the exposure to governmental sphere of influence is, the more likely a university will surrender to the government's functional expectation and if this same trend of dependency prevails across the system, the more similar the universities' responses will be as they respond to comply to the same central actor's expectation and vice versa.

Table 1 - Oliver's (1991) typology of strategic response

Strategy	Tactic	Examples
Acquiescence	Habit	Following invisible, taken-for-granted norms
	Imitate	Mimicking institutional models
	Comply	Obeying rules and accepting norms
Compromise	Balance	Balancing the expectations of multiple constituents
	Pacify	Placating and accommodating institutional elements
	Bargain	Negotiating with institutional stakeholders
Avoid	Conceal	Disguising nonconformity
	Buffer	Loosening institutional attachments
	Escape	Changing goals, activities, or domains
Defy	Dismiss	Ignoring explicit norms and values
	Challenge	Contesting rules and requirements
	Attack	Assaulting the sources of institutional pressure
Manipulate	Co-opt	Importing influential constituents
	Influence	Shaping values and criteria
	Control	Dominating institutional constituents and processes

Under the frame of this assumption, Oliver's (1991:152-159) typology of organizations' strategic response to environmental pressure provides sound frame of reference for analyzing and interpreting the response of Ethiopian universities to the BPR reform. Oliver outlined a typology consisting five categories of organizations' strategic response to environmental pressure in ascending order ranging from the most passive to the most active, the more compliant to the more defiant and the more impotent to the more influential one depending on the combination of the antecedents leading to the reform and individual institution's context (See Table 1). Each category is further subdivided into three types of behavior ranging from passive conformity to active resistance to institutional pressures. By combining these strategic responses with a range of antecedents i.e. why pressure is being exerted (cause), who is exerting pressure (constituent), what the pressures consist of (content), how and by what means they are exerted (control) and where they occur (context), she outlined a number of hypotheses regarding how individual organizations act in real terms with greater degree of resource reliance, soaring match in objectives, strong control mechanisms and a high degree of interconnectedness in the environment leading to less resistance and more conformity and vice versa (Oliver 1991:159-171).

The analysis and interpretation of the universities response to the reform initiative in this study bases on these Oliver's category of organizational response to environmental pressure and her hypothesis regarding the actual response of an organization. However, interpreting the universities' response under this typology requires delineating to what values and ideals the universities are expected to conform. In this regard, as it is drawn from the private sector, BPR's basic values and ideals are embedded in the private sector's managerialist ideals in which corporate discourse of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility and responsiveness are institutionalized (see Davenport & Short 1990, Hammers 1990, Hammers & Champy 1993). Hence, the universities' organizational response should be seen in light with the extent their new structures match to the backdrop of these private sector's organizational mottos and ethos.

One cautionary issue that must be reminded here in the use of this typology to the Ethiopian case is contextual difference. As the Ethiopian context presents extremely controlled environment, it normally does not give individual institutions much room to actively maneuver their response especially when it comes to the most active and defiant

responses. Even then, as the change strategy followed by the government offer relative autonomy to the institutions, the universities response may take different form within the lower level responses.

3.4 Conceptualizing Institutional Governance in HE - Towards an Interpretative Framework

The discussion so far presents the conceptual perspectives that underpin the assumptions and premises about organizational responses to environmental pressure. However, having a framework for organizational response to environmental pressures is not enough to analyze the governance change in the universities. It requires delineation of analytical tools that can be used as a frame of reference in exploring the governance change within the universities. In line with this, in this section attempt is made to conceptualize institution level governance and thereby, provide interpretative archetypes that can be used in analyzing the governance change within the universities.

Governance in its basic theme is a relational concept whose meaning depends on the point of departure, level of analysis and context in which it is described. A variety of definitions ranging from rhetorical to substantial ones are found in the literature making a single unanimously comprehensive definition a difficult one (see Goedegebuure and Hayden 2007, Kitthananan 2006, Meek & Davies 2009, Rhodes 1996, Stoker 1998). In spite of this variation, a common element in conceptualizing it in HE is the notion of multifaceted web of interactions and relationships among bodies operating at different levels defining where a decision is made by whom, when and on what aspect (see Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002, De Boer & File 2009, Goedegebuure & Hayden 2007, Maassen 2003, Meek 2003). For instance, Toma (2007:58) referred to governance '*as simple and as complicated as responding to the question- who make decision?*' In a similar inclination, Gallagher (2001 in Meek 2003:12) delineated it as the structure of relationships that authorize policies, plans & decisions; and account for their probity & responsiveness. Likewise, De Boer and File (2009:10), Marginson & Considine (2000:07) and Meek (2003:12) described it in the lenses of decision making and patterns of authority distribution.

HE governance can be labeled at two levels - institutional/internal and system coordination/external governance (De Boer and File 2009:10). System governance encompasses the vast array of macro level structures and relationships through which the regulatory framework and policies for tertiary education are developed, how money is allocated to institutions and how they are accountable for the way it is spent, as well as less formal structures and relationships which steer and influence behavior across the system. Whereas institutional governance refers to the structures and processes within individual institutions that establish responsibilities and authority, determines relationships between positions and thereby define the ways through which all parties in a university setting relate to each other (De Boer and File 2009, Maassen 2003, Santiago 2008). The relationship between the two levels determines the characteristics of individual HEIs, how they relate to the whole system, the nature of academic work and more importantly the ways the HEIs are organized and governed. The central focus of this study rests at the institution level governance. Hence, hereafter the term institutional governance is used to refer to the structures and processes through which communities in a university interact with and influence each other in making decisions.

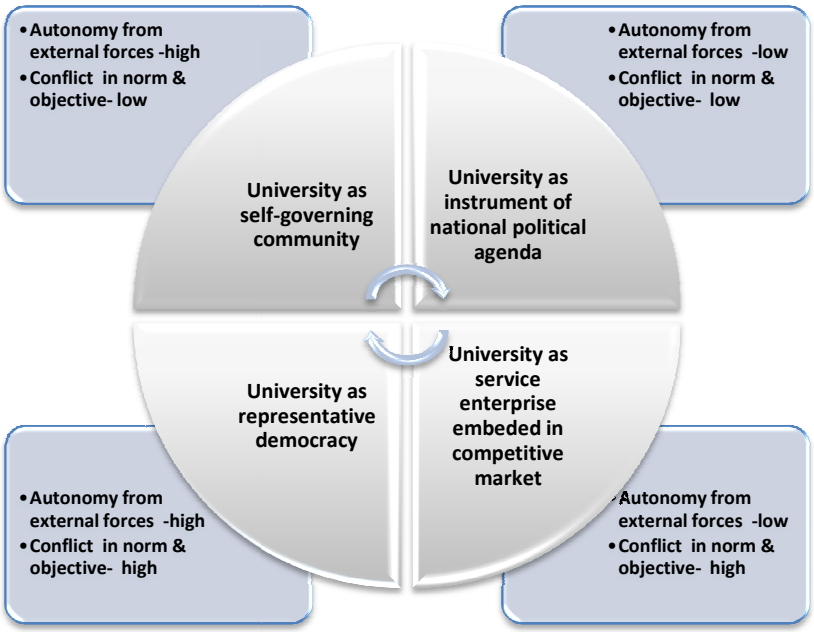
Examining the restructuring of institutional governance in a university setting not only needs the conception of institutional governance but also analytical tools to systematically analyze how the core elements underlying institutional governance are integrated with each other. A systematic approach for examining the means of differentiation and integration in terms of how an individual HEI coheres; how it exercises authority; how it relates to internal members (such as students and staff); how decisions are made and how far it delegates responsibility for decisions is needed. According to (Olsen 2007), these issues vary according to the dominant idea of what a university is in a respective HE system - university as an institution and as an instrument. He described the two ideals as follow:

> *The University can be seen as an organizational instrument for achieving predetermined preferences and interests. Then the issue is how the University can be organized and governed in order to achieve tasks and objectives in the most efficient way....The University can also be seen as an institution. An institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively*

resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances (Olsen 2007:)

Based on these ideas, he outlined four visions of university governance and organization (see Figure 1). In the first two visions, the university is seen as instrument of internal actors and hence, its structures, operations and dynamics are assumed to be determined mainly by internal factors. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are seen as two sides of the same coin with collegial dealings being the primary mechanism for decision-making. In the remaining two visions, university dynamics are conceived to be determined by interests and demands emanating from the external environment. Institutional autonomy is thus circumscribed by the hierarchical deliberations coming from governmental actions and deliberations in the case of 'university as instrument of national agenda' and by responsiveness and flexibility in meeting community exigencies in a system filled with competition in the case of 'university as service enterprise' (Olsen 2007:07-12).

Figure 2 - Visions of university governance and organization by Olsen (2007)



Though they offer sound insights to university organization and governance, individually each of these visions is limited in providing a complete picture. Each focuses on how

order and integration in a university system come about from a particular perspective and thereby help understand the dynamics of governance from a specific point of view. In doing so, they inevitably obliterate the view from other dimensions. However, they should not be seen as mutually exclusive but in combination to one another. The extent to which a specific form dominates in a given university setting varies according to national context in which the HEI under consideration operates (see Dill 2000, Clark 1983). According to Clark (1983), the context in which HEIs operates is dependent on where the national HE system under consideration is placed within the three-dimensional field of coordination constituted by academic oligarchy, state authority and the market. Through his famous 'triangle of coordination', Clark (1983) demonstrated how these three forces determine the way in which a HE system is coordinated. State authority refers to governmental deliberations to steer the decisions and actions of societal actors. Market forces refer to unregulated exchanges linking persons' interest and parts together under competitive conditions. Academic oligarchy refers to the coordinating capacities of academic elites who work together to influence and guide decisions and actions in the respective national system. Using these three coordinating mechanisms, Clark constructed his triangle in which each location represents the combination of the three in different degree. In this triangular field of coordination, countries are evidenced to have developed different forms: a more market-like co-ordination (example: the USA), bureaucracy induced co-ordination (example: the USSR and Sweden) and academic oligarchy dominated co-ordination (examples Italy and UK) (Clark 1983:137-145).

With this system level variation come the three modal types of university organization: the continental model (hierarchical), the United Kingdom model (collegial), and the United States model (managerial) (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002, Clark 1983, Dill 2000). The continental model embodies fundamental aspects of the bureaucratic mode of integration in which authority is shared by faculty guilds and state bureaucracy (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002). Academic policies such as the validation of courses and diplomas, the size of academic staff, the conditions of student admissions, and the formal structure of internal management and governance are standardized at the national level. This eventually eliminated the need for institutional level mechanisms to integrate academic matters. In institutions where such model dominates, the governance of academic work is coordinated and directed individually by the chair holding professors as part of their activity at the operating level units and collectively by a group of professors exercising

collegial rule at the institution level (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002, Clark 1983, Dill 2000). Thus, when seen vertically, this model has placed authority at the bottom in guild forms and at the top in ministerial bureaucracy with weak authority at the institution level (Clark 1983). In contrast to the continental model's view of HE governance, the UK model is premised on the belief that HE is too important to be left to the political whims of the nation state. It emphasized the importance of institutional autonomy and self-government (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002). Hence, in a national system where this model dominates, universities are seen as separate corporations responsible for their own management, for admission of students, for curriculum, and for hiring academic staff (Dill 2000). Power is thus shared between academic oligarchy and institutional administrators and trustees. Thus, when seen vertically, this mode places strong authority in the operating and institution level units with active institutional-level administration (Clark 1983). The distinguishing characteristic of this model in comparison to the others is the essence of tradition, shared values, and collegial structures for integrating academic work, as well as the reliance on professional judgment as a means of resolving conflicts (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002, Clark 1983, Dill 2000). The US system embodies relatively distinctive perspective compared to the UK and continental model. Dill (2000) put it as follows:

> *The absence of national standards on student admissions, faculty personnel policies, and course and degree policies, coupled with variations in policies across 50 state systems and a large private sector, creates a competitive system in which institutional-level academic administration is substantially stronger and better developed than in other countries.*

Thus, the dynamics of institutional governance in systems where this form dominates is highly overtaken by the application of rational business criteria to the work of universities, with a greater influence by external actors, increased attention to strategic management, greater emphasis on leadership and reduced emphasis on collective decision-making being central to internal governance. Decision-making processes are dominated by a small group of executives at the top of the decision-making structure that can respond in a timely manner to a dynamic and competitive environment (Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002, Dill 2000).

The latter part of last century's experience in academe witnessed an ostensible move towards a managerial model as an organizational ideal though the extent to which it has been followed up in practice varies from country to country and institution to institution (see Amaral, Jones & Karseth 2002). A number of interrelated developments within the higher education sector and the broader environment can be identified as drivers underlying the change. After World War II, the coincidence of an unprecedented demand for HE, coupled with increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-economic development by governments, had dramatically transformed universities from elite to mass system (Castells 2001). Alongside this, tectonic stresses underpinning broader change forces emanating from macro-environmental forces such as globalization, IT revolution & the subsequent growing importance of knowledge in economy, polity & society had remarkably contributed to the decrease in social and political homogeneity among individuals, leading to an erosion of a collective identity (see Peters 2001, De Boer and Goedegebuure 2003, Maassen 2003, Vaira 2004, Teixeira et al 2004, Fullan 2009). All these challenged public funding and provision of HE while undermining the capability of national governments to steer and coordinate society. This eventually brought a shift in political rhetoric in the western world towards market-oriented models regarding the provision and coordination of HE. It changed how HEIs are defined and understood, the role and relationship the institutions have with society, the nature of academic work and more importantly the ways they are funded, governed & steered (De Boer and Geodegebuure 2003). This shift in Clark's (1983) triangle is revealed in the tendency of the state to step-back and allow decision-making by individual students, institutions and independent agencies in a market-like mechanism. The reflection of this shift in the organization and governance of individual HEIs is the trend towards more entrepreneurial and managerial patterns leading to the infusion of private sector ethos of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness (see De Boer and Goedegebuure 2003, Maassen 2003, Vaira 2004, Teixeira et al 2004, Fullan 2009, De Boer and File 2009).

The organizational ideals, coordination mechanisms and trends discussed so far are from the perspective of developed countries. Applying these to the developing world requires careful consideration of contextual variation and contemporary rhetoric in the governance of HE in this part of the world. In reference to the first aspect, developing countries present a unique social, economical and political context completely different from their developed counterparts. In the first place, the socio-politics landscape of these countries is

deeply rooted in autocratic culture that made social, political and economic institutions functionally dependent on governmental deliberations. Likewise, these countries represent a scenario where market forces are not sufficiently evolved to coordinate the actions of entities, let alone in such quasi-public sector, even in private sectors. As is the case across all other sectors, the HE sector in these countries is known by extremely low internal efficiency (resource utilization as indicated by costs per graduates, drop-out rates, and study duration in comparison to the countries' limited resource) and external efficiency (the relationship with the labor market) (see Neave and van Vught 1994, Cloete et al 2011). Hence, the conventional interplay between market forces and governmental regulation is unrealistic. Besides, HE is a recent phenomenon in these countries in general and African countries in particular. It is the outcome of a recent transplantation of HE models from the western world (see Altbach 2004, Mwiria 1992, Thompson 1977, Yusufu 1973). This has at least two implications on the interplay of the three coordinating forces. First, the sector's recent origin would mean that there are no well-established academic supper-barons who can influence the dynamics of the countries' HE system. Second, the forced transplantation of colonial models, which are developed in a completely different social, political and economic context, created problems of structural adaptation (Neave and van Vught 1994). These factors coupled with the institutionalization of developmental university idea especially among African countries since the 1960's resulted in authoritarian rule towards the governance of HE in these countries. van Vught (1991:01) put it as follows:

> *In developing countries the state control model of HE appears to be predominant … government heavily regulates and controls HEIs even in countries, where initially state supervising model was introduced, very often now governments appear to have instilled the state control model.*

Hence, in a system where the state acts as omniscient and omnipotent actor to collectively coordinate and influence the means of production, distribution, and exchange in the sector, the natural mode of coordination is bureaucracy with hierarchical form of organization being the dominant form in individual HEIs. The interpretation of the afore-discussed organizational ideals of universities in these countries should capture this circumscribed contextual reality.

The emerging form of governance in the developing countries' HEIs should not only be seen from the unique context of these countries but also the contemporary sectoral, national and global reform rhetoric and circumstances. Nationally, HE in developing countries is in crisis owing to more or less similar forces of massification and resource shortage (Neave and van Vught 1994). Globally, the governments of these countries are increasingly pushed by supra-national agencies like World Bank and IMF to conform their institutional and organizational structure to globally rationalized myths of market algorithm, minimalist state and corporate managerialism (see for e.g. Vaira 2004, Maassen 2003:31, Torres and Schugurensky 2002). This by itself presents a unique reality in these countries' reform rhetoric. Developing countries' governments are sandwiched between internal crisis and external pressure. Hence, to provide an insightful description on the emerging pattern of governance in these countries' HE, not only consideration of endemic contextual settings and inherent nature of governments but also the driving force behind reforms in these countries is needed.

Putting aside the contextual considerations, operationalizing the organizational ideals as analytical tool requires two conditions. Firstly, delineation of indicators is needed. As they convey a general impression that provides a broad indication of the state of reality on the ground, indicators help to systematically uncover which form/mode prevails in a respective university's organizational setting. In this regard, a set of indicators as presented in Table 1 is formulated. Second is the resolution of how to recognize and interpret a dominant pattern in those indicators. In setting up a framework for analysis, Greenwood and Hinings (1993:1055) suggest the use of an interpretive scheme. For them, the starting point for identifying a dominant pattern is having an interpretive scheme synthesized from existing forms. In line with this, an interpretive scheme that describes the typical characteristic of the indicators in each of the organizational models – hierarchical, collegial and managerial/business oriented is provided in the table. It should be noted that the general characteristics pointed for each indicator under each model are not mutually exclusive. They can be noticed alongside each other in a given institution but the dominance of one form over the other might be noticed depending on the prevailing integration mode shaping the whole dynamics.

Table 2 - Description of indicators to the themes of institutional governance

Indicators	Hierarchical Model	Collegial Model	Business Enterprise Model
Nature of structures	Hierarchical - standard across all units	Lateral- modestly standard across all units	Pluralistic – different from unit to unit according to changing circumstances and customers exigencies
Power distribution	Centralized at the apex of the system in the hands of governmental bureaucrats	Decentralized; distributed among faculty	Centralized; in the hands of institutional leaders and executive position holders in the hierarchy
Autonomy of internal units	Low	High	Differ depending on changing circumstances and suitability to meet customers exigencies
Interaction pattern in decision making	Hierarchically rational process Individual bureaucrat centered	Collegial process Collective group based	Economically rational process Individual manager centered
Level of Staff Participation	Low staff participation	High staff participation	Relatively modest participation
Accrued leadership	Autocratic	Participatory, representative & transformational	Managerial
Recruitment and selection practices	Appointment by bureaucracy	By election for rotating term	Merit based appointment
Performance appraisal	Dominated by hierarchical dealings	Dominated by peer based collective evaluation	Dominated by leader's judgment
Coordination and control	By hierarchy	General norms and standards	Internal competition and economic relevance

In general, the prevailing pattern of the universities' organizational functioning is assumed to be a function of a dominant form among the three forces of integration: bureaucracy, clan and markets. Hence, the interpretative scheme outlined above dishes up as a baseline to recognize the dominant patterns embedded in the dynamics of the universities organizational functioning. After identifying the dominant patterns, the

question would be how to interpret the extent to which governance in Ethiopian HEIs is changed and to where the change is leading. In view of this, Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization provide insightful analytical tools to relate the Ethiopian universities emerging governance dynamics to external stakeholders in general, government in particular. It helps to interpret the universities' new arrangement as a function of governmental BPR reform within the frame of the analytical framework drawn from neo-institutional and resource dependency perspective.

4 Analysis and Discussion

This section provides analysis of the universities' institutional governance as defined by the formal structures and empirical functioning of these structures as perceived by sampled respondents from the three targeted universities. It is divided into four main sections. First, it begins with the analysis of institutional governance before the BPR initiative. In the second section, it portrays how the state of affairs is transformed after the reform. This section is further categorized into five portions – governance arrangement at institution level, governance arrangement at academic unit level, autonomy and patterns of power distribution in academic units, staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes and status of change in the universities. In the final two sections, discussion on the universities organizational response and the emerging mode of governance is given.

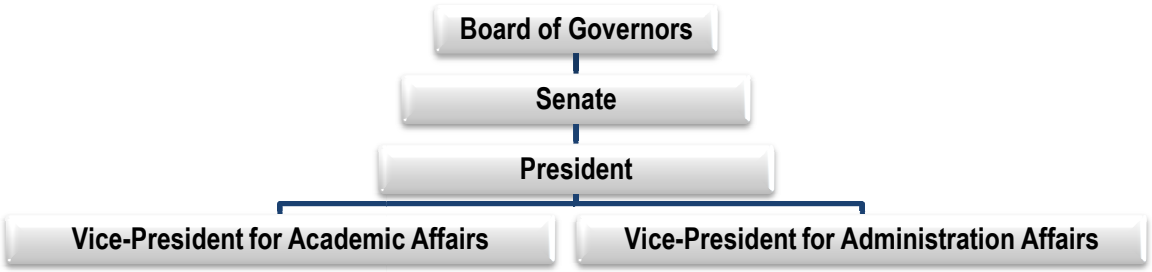
4.1 Institutional governance in Ethiopian HEIs before BPR reform

Before the BPR initiative, the framework for institutional governance in Ethiopian universities was defined by the 2003 proclamation, which drew on the sector's 50 years tradition. Thus, comprehending the organizational make up as prescribed by the 2003 proclamation requires a review of the organizational structure of the country's universities preceding that proclamation. Prior to the 2003 proclamation, the sector used to be formally governed by the 1977 proclamation. However, the 1977 proclamation itself did not contain a specific deliberation as to how an individual university was supposed to be organized. Rather, the internal governance and organizational make up of HEIs in Ethiopia was heavily influenced by the tradition of the country's oldest institution, Addis Ababa University (AAU) as many of the country's HEIs were the outgrowth of this university. Hence, understanding the organization of HEIs in Ethiopia should begin with groping the ideals embodied in AAU's tradition.

In this regard, while other African countries were wedded to the systems of their colonial masters, owing to its independence heritage Ethiopia was thought to have the opportunity to choose the kind of HE system that would suit its needs. However, this freedom of choice was largely negated by the influence of American aid money and the American

administrators this money brought to AAU in those initial years. Owing to this, even though it drew its organizational experience from the wider international practice, in essence, AAU was more influenced by the US universities' organizational makeup than by continental European or UK models (see Gilbert 1967, Kehoe 1962). Hence, as shown in Figure 2, like US universities, AAU had a localized federal bureaucracy in which ultimate authority vested in the apex of the structure in the form of institutional trusteeship and administration. At the top of the structure were board of governors to whom the president of the university and senate of the university were accountable. The Board of governors, which consisted of the university's president as ex-officio member and eight members to be appointed by the then emperor, was designated as the highest decision making body (see Ahmed 2006, Gemeda 2008 Wagaw 1978 & 1990).

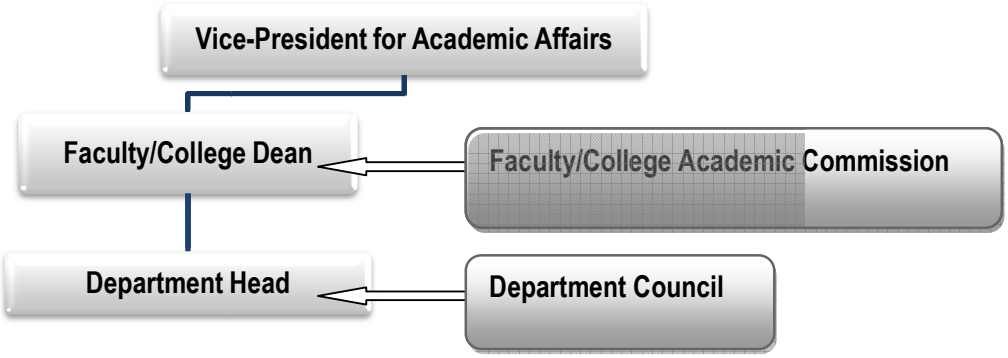
Figure 3 - **Institutional level Organizational Structure of Haile Selassie I University**



According to this structure, the internal governance of the university had three academic levels - institutional, college/faculty and department level. The highest internal governing body next to the board at institution level was the university's senate which had the responsibility of managing the university. It was composed of ex-officio members - the president along with the two vice presidents, faculty and college deans, staff and student representatives, students' dean, the university registrar and a cross section of representatives from selected mass organizations and government agencies. It used to be chaired by the university's president. Under the senate, the president along with the two vice presidents would form a committee called senate executive committee (SEC) which had the responsibility of managing the day to day operations of the university on behalf of the senate. The sphere of responsibility under this hierarchy divided into two wings - academic and administrative. Each of the two wings meant to be headed by vice presidents with the university president being the ultimate chief executive in both responsibility

areas. The president was to be appointed by the government upon the recommendation by the board and so were the vice-presidents.

Figure 4 - Middle and lower level structure of a university setting before BPR reform



At the next faculty/college level was the Faculty/College Academic Commission (AC), the second highest decision making body within the university, in the form of congregation of the college/faculty's academic officers such as dean, vice-dean, department heads, and faculty/college registrar, elected staff and student representatives. It mimics the then senate in a sense that it had the same mandate of deciding on academic issues at the faculty/college level. Faculty/college deans, whose term in office lasts two years, used to be elected by their respective academic staffs though their appointment was contingent on procedural approval by the president. The lowest academic decision making unit was the department headed by a department head. As was the case with faculty dean appointments, department head selection used to be decided by academic staffs' vote pending the respective faculty's dean procedural approval. Each department had a Department Council (DC) composed of full-time academic staff. The DC was chaired by a department head with the academic mandate similar to the AC and senate (see Ahmed 2006, UNESCO 1988, Wagaw 1978 &1990).

In this make up, even though the nature of the structures was in general hierarchical, astute examination of power distribution reveals how the hierarchical structure was dictated by collegial structures. For instance, though the apex of authority rises as one moves from bottom to top as is the case in the traditional single line bureaucracy, it is highly overtaken by horizontal relationships when it comes to the dynamics of interaction at a specific level such as between university president vs university senate, faculty dean

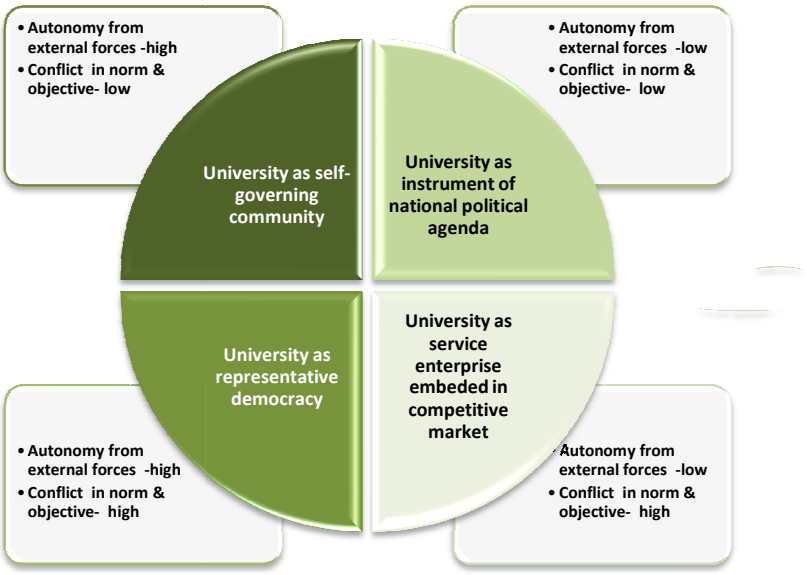
vs academic commission and department head vs department council. Although the university was run by presidents and vice-presidents appointed by the government, the highest decision making power in the universities vested in the university's senate. Down to the hierarchy at colleges/faculty and department level, the units were deemed to be relatively autonomous in their academic decision with the collegial based academic commission (AC) and department commission (DC) being the highest decision making body respectively.

Though there could be minor differences from institution to institution, the overall organizational structure of the universities was somewhat similar to this generic model (see UNESCO 1988 and Wagaw 1990). Each of the country's HEIs had similar structures built on this predominantly collegial structure. Even the 1977 proclamation did not change any of this make up except from superseding university governing board whose function was supplanted by Commission for Higher Education (CHE) (see HEP 1977). More recently, with the ratification of the new higher education proclamation in 2003, an attempt to formally address as to how the universities should be structured was made. However, as is the case with its predecessor, the proclamation did not bring considerable change apart from resurrecting university board. In line with this, the universities' management and administration was once again set to be carried out in the name of an independent board as free standing institution (see HEP 2003, Section Three for detail).

All in all, the formal structure of the universities before BPR drew on predominantly collegial arrangements that emphasized the importance of collective decision-making. Though institutions of governance at each level were accountable to those organized at the next higher level, the heart of decision making at each level was lying in the lateral academic councils i.e. senate, academic commission and department councils. Each of these bodies was positioned and connected to the executives at its respective level, i.e. president, deans and department heads, in such a way that they not only make decisions but also check executives' accountability. The role of academic executives such as president, deans and department heads was to execute the collective decisions made by the respective academic council. Given all this delineation, the formal framework of institutional governance in Ethiopian universities before BPR can be considered as leaning more to collective leadership ideals than leadership by executive fiat. Interpretation of this

arrangement by using Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization gives the institutions too much expletive appearance as blend of self-governing community.

Figure 5 - Ethiopian universities' formal framework before BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization and governance



Note – *The depth of colors ranging from deep green to light green indicates the prevalent mode with deep green indicating dominant form on the one end of the continuum and light green indicating least one on the other end of the continuum.*

However, as normally is the case in a developing country context, practical account divulges how the ideals embodied in the formal framework were an exception than a rule. Even though the universities' governance structure was formally built on collective leadership ideals, its practicability has often been in question. In the first place, the universities' autonomy to pursue their undertakings without external interference has normally been subject to persistent circumcision by the central government since the sector's inception (see Assefa 2008, Gemeda 2008, UNESCO 1988, Wagaw 1990 & 1979). Even nowadays, this regime superseding tradition has left long shadows of embedded impulse in the deeds of the incumbent government. Strict and sometimes arbitrary interference over various aspects of the individual HEIs such as academic staff recruitment and personnel administration, curriculum issues, student enrollment and

placement, and financial decisions is still evident (see Assefa 2008, Gemeda 2008, HESO 2004, Mehari 2010, Semela 2008). The following excerption from Mekele University BPR team report on Academic Core Process Reengineering is an excellent illustration of the state of affairs.

> *The current situation of Mekelle University is found to be painful. Lack of shared vision being the major cause for the pain, it has large number and variety of manifestations. As the team sees, the university does not have autonomy in decision making like curriculum, student enrollment, budget administration, and salary adjustment, which means the top managers have no full ownership of the University and they focus on routines of the system instead of working on strategic ones. (MU 2008a: 15)*

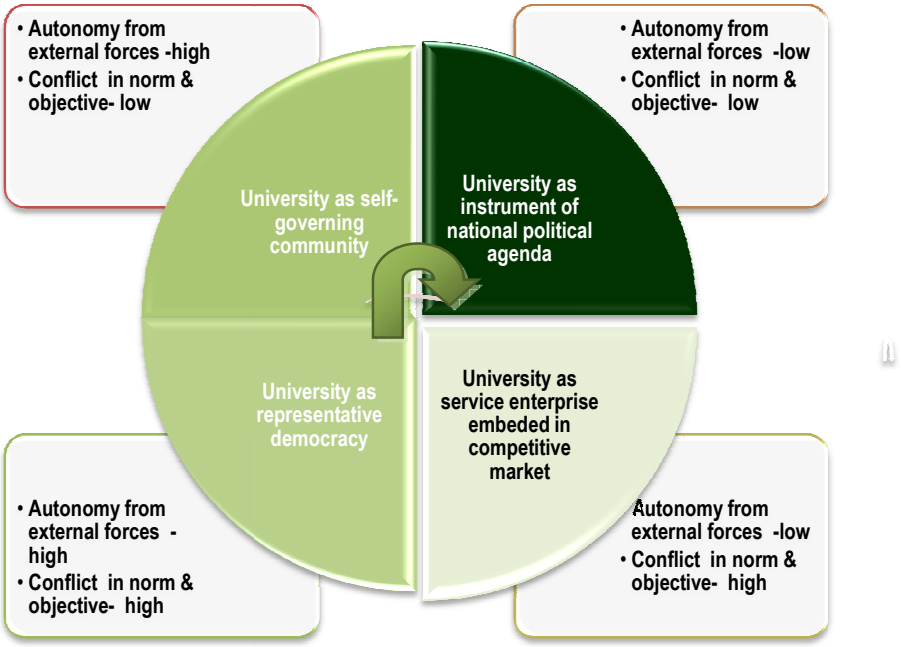
The glimpse of this officious culture is also reflected even in those matters which are normally left to the universities' discretion. The extreme autocratic culture by the central government is evidenced to weaken the collective decision making process within the universities' internal academic units leading to localized authoritarianism (see AAU 2011, HU 2008, MU 2008a). The following excerption from AAU's document for reform on academic governance is a good description of the situation at hand.

> *Partly due to external influence and partly due to internal failures, university governance increasingly came to give primacy to control, expediency, and quick results over institutional work and participatory decision-making. One consequence of this state of affairs has been the over-centralization of the academic structure in general and the steady growth of the executives' power in particular. From the Senate and its standing committees all the way down to department/faculty assemblies and their committees, the bodies and organs through which faculty members participated and influenced academic decision-making have gradually been losing their influence, if not their form. The centralization of academic administration at the University level appears to have also encouraged a tendency towards centralization of decision-making in the academic units as well, so that, at least in some units, deans and department chairs came to regard their offices as dominions of power from where they could make decisions willfully and at times whimsically (AAU 2011:03).*

The drift of power in favor of academic leaders and the subsequent tendency towards centralization of decision-making in the academic units not only affected the collective decision-making process but also the level of staff participation. Staff participation within

the universities was reported to have been continually declining owing to the incessant deterioration in the universities work environment. In all the three universities' preliminary assessment, a visible decline in the motivation of the faculty to take active part in academic governance was reported to have reached a level of total apathy (see AAU 2011, HU 2008, MU 2008).

Figure 6 - Practical account of Ethiopian Universities' internal dynamics before BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) four visions of university organization and governance



Note – *The depth of colors ranging from deep green to light green indicates the prevalent mode with deep green indicating dominant form on the one end of the continuum and light green indicating least one on the other end of the continuum.*

All these empirical accounts of the sector – excessive governmental interference, extreme centralization of power in the hands of academic leaders in general and institution level leaders in particular, the subsequent circumcision of autonomy both institution wide and internal academic units perspective, and low staff participation, points to the dominance of an authoritative system in which academics are governed top-down through chains of command that cascade from higher to lower echelons as opposed to the central idea of participatory governance. Assessment of all of these indicates how the universities

practical experience is manifested by the description of university as predominantly top-down system dominated by hierarchical control.

4.2 Institutional governance in Ethiopian HEIs after BPR reform

4.2.1 Governance Arrangement at Institution Level

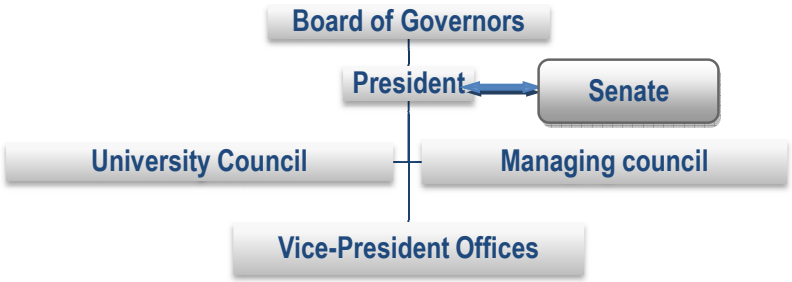
A preliminary comparison of the universities' new organizational structure may divulge how similar the form, composition and responsibility of the new institution level governing bodies is across the universities. This, however, may give a deceptive notion of the universities' organizational response to the BPR initiative. As each university tried to make its organization robust, individually each came up with a structure different from one another in different aspects. Some universities opt to instill new governing bodies alongside the traditional senate while others propose a change in the composition and duty of already existing bodies and positions. For instance, in terms of composition, the initial generic structure of Mekele University had provision to include representatives of the university community alongside external stakeholders in the University's board (see MU 2008a). This, however, is not the case with respect to Addis Ababa University and Hawassa University both of which designate members of their University Board to be exclusively drawn from external stakeholders (AAU 2009, HU 2008a). In the same way, the internal governing bodies and structures showed notable differences. In this regard, the structure proposed by AAU puts a diversified set of decision-making arrangements, which involve both a selective regeneration of existing structures and a creative adaptation of new bodies, e.g. proposition of new advisory bodies alongside senate at university level (see AAU 2011 for detail). Whereas in Hawassa University and Mekele University, renovating of existing structures has been the trend (see HU 2008b &2008c, MU 2008b & 2008c).

Nevertheless, these institutional differences have been concealed by the provisions of the recently revised legislation. After reviewing the preliminary arrangement proposed by individual universities, the government has revisited the legal framework in 2009 under the pretext of making the legal framework compatible to the ideals embodied in the BPR (See HEP 2009:4976 for detailed view). Following the statutory revision, the divergence

trend evidenced in the universities' initial organization proposal was drained as each of them modified their arrangement in accordance with the provisions of the new legislation. Owing to this, conceptualizing the universities' new structures requires groping how distinct the revised legislation is from the previous one.

The difference between the 2009 proclamation and the 2003 proclamation can be seen in terms of orientation and content. In reference to orientation, the new framework becomes more general as one moves from the apex of a university structure down to the lower levels. In the new framework, detailed provisions are provided only to institution level governing bodies with particulars for medium and lower levels left to be decided by the individual institutions (see HEP 2009, Part Three). With this, the new proclamation gave university incumbents more autonomy to reorganize their respective university's internal structure except those institution level bodies which are precisely defined by the law. As opposed to this, the 2003 proclamation had a detailed articulation for all levels (see HEP 2003, Part Three). In terms of content, in the 2003 proclamation, the arrangements of governing bodies at each level were stipulated in such a way that they would be compatible to representative and collective leadership ideals. In line with this, the governance structures at all levels were articulated in such a way that all constituents in the university community would have a voice. Nevertheless, in the 2009 proclamation, as evidenced by the tilting of power to executives over the collegial academic councils, apparent deliberation to move away from representative and collective leadership to powerful executive leadership is evidenced (See HEP 2009, Part Three and HEP 2003 Part Three for detail). The following figure shows the universities new institution level arrangement as defined by the new statutory.

Figure 7 - Prototype structure of institution level organization of a university after BPR



As can be seen from the figure, the new arrangement involves not only rejuvenation of existing bodies but also a creation of new ones. In line with this, the composition, power and duty of existing decision making bodies have been transformed considerably. In addition to this, new governing bodies in the form of university council and managing councils have been set up alongside the senate. Hence, unlike the previous arrangement in which institution level governance is dominated by a horizontal interaction between university president and senate, university level governance is now conditioned by multifaceted complex hierarchical and horizontal network of interactions and relationships among a set of bodies and positions.

The University Board, as is the case with the previous arrangement, is designated as the ultimate supreme governing body of a university. Article 45, sub-article 1 of the 2009 proclamation delineates the board to consist of a university president as non-voting member and seven voting members drawn from external stakeholders. The board is accountable to the Ministry of Education. Sub-article 2 of the same article articulates how members of the board are drawn. In this regard, the Ministry of Education is entitled to appoint the board chairperson and three additional voting members whereas the university president in consultation with the university council and senate nominates the remaining three voting members of the board. In line with this, even though there has been no significant change in terms of the board's duty, the universities are now provided with the opportunity to participate in selecting members of the board. However, majority of the interviewees doubted the practicability of this provision as no indication of putting it into effect has been evidenced so far. A typical interview response from AAU puts it as follows

> *What is laid by the statutory is a matter of formality. In real terms, in selecting candidates for board, I don't think the university can exercise its right in its own way. I never heard of such a thing. Even if there is such a thing, as practical experience tells, the university's president will normally consult the ministry of education before he designates any candidates for the board room and then, for the sake of formality; the case can be brought to the senate which often times opts to unanimously rectify such governmentally ready-made issues without making reasonable discussion. That is how things of such nature are usually decided in our university... (Interviewee 1, AAU).*

In a similar inclination, another higher official from HU stressed the essence to work in consultation with the central government. Though he does not mention government's

interference as hindrance to the university's autonomy, the presence of the influence can be felt from his words. He explained as follow

> *Yes the new provision provides us with the chance to have a say on board members but we have not yet practiced it as we needed time to prepare ourselves for its implementation. However, in the near future, perhaps in the coming few months, we will exercise our right. In doing so, the university management will consult not only the university senate but also the concerned ministry office. Even though the university is not obliged to consult with the government, having such harmonious relation is important as the lion share of our budget comes from the government (Interviewee 1, HU)*

Contrary to this stand, a majority of interviewees have reservations with respect to the government's potential interference in choosing board members. The following response is typical one among those lined up in this category.

> *Members of the board who are assigned through government dictated way are most of the time chosen not because they have sufficient professional experience but they are suitable to the government. As a matter of fact, as past experience tells, most of them do not have the relevant educational background and practical experience. (Interviewee 3, AAU)*

Indeed, this problem in selecting board members with relevant backgrounds is evidenced to have existed in the deeds of the government before the BPR reform (see HESO 2004). In 2004, a study conducted by Higher Education System Overhaul team composed of HEIs leaders indicated how the universities' boardrooms were constrained regarding members' capacity. If the status quo goes on this way (at the moment, there is no indication that it might change), it pinpoints the continuity of the trend.

As far as senate is concerned, its composition and duty have been transformed significantly though not radically. As opposed to the previous statute, where senate membership is assumed by academic officers as ex-officio members, the new provision designates the majority of senate members to constitute of faculty members. However, such members of the senate are to be appointed by the respective university president (Article 50, Sub-article 2, HEP 2009:5014). In terms of power, in the previous structure, senate had the authority to collectively assume the respective university's leadership through its executive body led by the president. However, in the new structure its position as supreme internal body has been substantially undermined as much of the formal authority is tilted to a university president, who is obliged to seek the senate's decision

only on major academic matters. Even then, the senate is still defined as supreme legislative body within a university's academic wing.

In addition to senate, the new provision designates the establishment of new institution level bodies in the form of university council and managing council. Both these bodies have an advisory role to the president on issues that require collective examination. As is the case with the senate, both are chaired by the president. The first is composed of members drawn from a wide variety of officers, academic staff and student representatives with a mandate to advise the president on academic issues. The latter consists of vice presidents and other central officers as an advisory body to the president on major administrative matters that require collective examination. It also serves as a forum for monitoring, coordinating, and evaluating institutional operations. Below the presidentship position, at central university management level, a number of vice and associate presidentships with a number of directorate offices are formed in place of the two vice-presidentship positions in the previous system. This is found to take different forms from university to university.

In general, in terms of power distribution, senate is drawn to have more of a legislative role with restricted regulatory power whereas the other institution level bodies, i.e. university and managing council, are designated to have an advisory role. With this, the former horizontally encapsulated structure is now dominated by hierarchical relationships in which institution level bodies such as managing council and university council are hierarchically accountable to the president. Even University Senate which is not accountable to the president is now pushed to the periphery in terms of power attributed to it. The interaction pattern within each of these governing bodies as delineated by the legislation of the respective universities is deemed to be collective and participatory. Nonetheless, a university president is the most powerful member in all the three bodies as s/he has a casting vote in case of a tie in addition to her/his chairmanship mandate and her/his individual discretion to decide on whom to select for membership to these bodies from among university faculty (See HEP 2009, Section Three).

The strengthening of executives' power in general and the university president in particular is viewed grudgingly by some of the interviewees. In their opinion, even though the move to empower academic leaders is constructive as it enables institutions to cope

with the slow collegial processes, the sloping of too much power in favor of university president is feared to result in officious culture in place ofcollective decision making process. The following interview response marks a good concern in this regard.

> *I don't understand the rationale why university president is given the dominion of choosing majority of senate members. This may transplant a potential incongruity that may endanger the participatory and collective institutional work within the senate. Through time, presidents may tend to use their right as a power base to avoid challenges from members of senate by instigating only those academics that they can easily manipulate. (Interviewee 1, AAU).*

Table 2 - Opinion of academic staff with respect to responsiveness, participatory and flexibility of institutional level governance in their university's new system in comparison to the previous system

Governance Dimension		Name of Institution			Combined average	Chi-square value
		AAU	HU	MU		
Participatory	**Mean**	**2.79**	**2.28**	**2.24**	**2.41**	0.07
	N	24	29	29	82	
Responsiveness	**Mean**	**2.42**	**2.10**	**2.28**	**2.26**	0.405
	N	24	29	29	82	
Flexibility	**Mean**	**2.38**	**2.03**	**2.07**	**2.15**	0.497
	N	24	29	29	82	

Note *– Academic staff from the three universities were asked to appraise how participatory, responsive and flexible their respective university's institution level governance is based on a five point scale that runs from very bad (1) to very good (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university and the 6th column shows combined average value for all the three universities. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as dissatisfaction and > 3.5 as satisfaction. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as neutral. Interpretation of the above figures with this scheme reveals how discontented the staffs are in relation to the respective dimensions. However, incisive examination of the figures for each individual institution shows that there is a slight difference in between AAU and the other two universities as AAU's figures lean positively in relative terms. Hence, to determine whether or not this pattern is statistically significant, Pearson Chi-square test at 0.01 level accompanied by cross-tabulation analysis is made between the independent variable, university, and the respective dimensions (See Appendix A-1). In order to reduce the number of responses having less than 5 cell count, the five point scale response label is re-grouped into a three point scale that runs from Dissatisfied to Satisfied. The Chi-square value computed, as shown in the 7th column of the table, are far greater than the reliability 0.01 level. This indicates that the aforementioned difference does not reflect a statistically significant pattern. Therefore, the initial interpretation made by the descriptive analysis can safely be assumed.*

Though they retreat to speculate on the situation, when asked directly, most of the interviewees avowed their concern regarding the potential risk in the strengthening of a

president's power. Correspondingly similar concern is reflected in the response of sampled academic staff majority of whom rated the institution level governance and management process of their respective university as less participatory, less responsive and less flexible (see Table 3 and its description). Indeed, as actors with higher influence usually opt to exercise their power whenever deemed necessary, the tilting of power in favor of a university president can have implications for the decision-making process of the governing bodies. As opposed to this, a few interviewees explained the essence of having greater power to executives to curb up potential draw backs of the sluggish collegial processes. In this regard, even those interviewees who stated their frustration did not deny the ill effects of participatory governance, especially the delay in making decision.

All in all, as evidenced by the deliberations of the formal provisions, it can be said that the previous arrangement that was constructed on the ideals of collective decision making is no longer presumed to be the dominant one. The trend reveals how institutional decision-making is positioned in a way that gives university executives managerial edge over collective academic bodies though the latter ones are still delineated to have a role. This divulges the underlying deliberations towards powerful executive leadership in place of the collective leadership ideals that were embodied in the previous system. Likewise, the empirical functioning of the system as perceived by academic staff and academic leaders points to the inclination towards strong executive fiat though the practicability of some aspects is questioned.

4.2.2 Governance Arrangement at Academic Unit Level

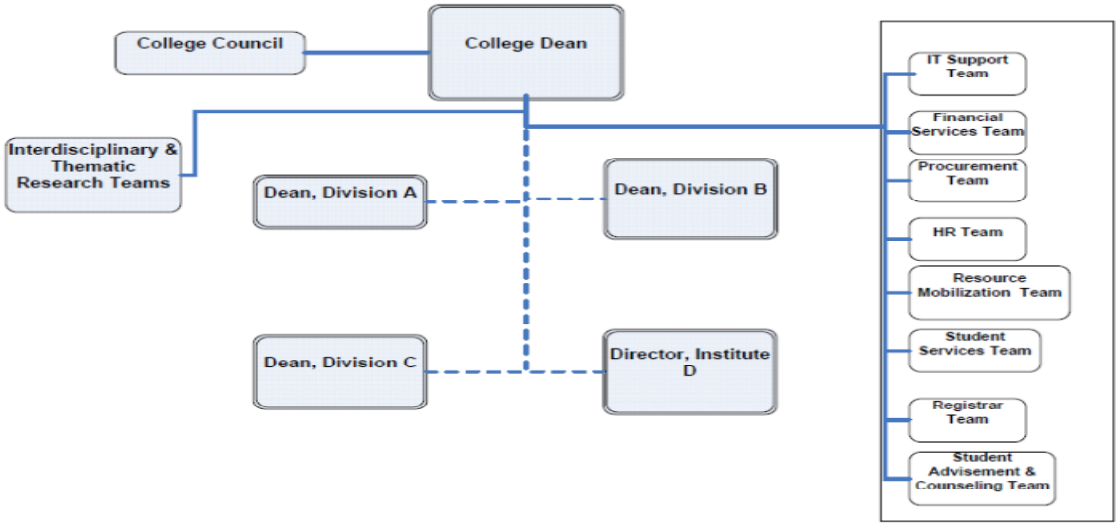
As has been elaborated in the previous section, the arrangement introduced by the 2009 legal framework becomes more specific as one moves from the lower levels to the apex of a university structure. Detailed provisions are provided only to institution level governing bodies with particulars for medium and lower levels left to be decided by the individual institutions' incumbents (see HEP 2009, Part Three). With this, it can be said that the universities were practically allowed to experiment with their own structure not at the whole hierarchy but at medium and lower levels. Owing to this, a facade view of the universities' institution level structure makes their structure resemble each other's. However, a thorough examination of the structures down in the hierarchy is needed to

grasp the whole picture as individual HEIs may differ in the way they organize their academic units, the scope of decision-making power they allow their units to enjoy and the relative distribution of power between executives and the respective governing bodies down in the hierarchy.

In this regard, as each individual university tried to come up with arrangements that are workable and meaningful to its context, the downward hierarchical line up in the targeted universities is found to be ambivalent in a sense that in some aspects it shows moderately dissimilar structures. In the case of AAU, the university's academic administration below the institution level is designated to have three hierarchical levels: department, school and college (AAU 2011). Hawassa University in its turn opted for experimenting with a school structure for all of its academic units with nominal colleges in between schools and university level management (HU 2008c). In the case of Mekele, the downward hierarchy below the institution level did not witness a far reaching change. As is a case with the structure before the BPR reform, the university is formed by a federation of internally autonomous colleges followed by schools/departments (MU 2008a, 2008b & 2008c).

In a similar leaning, the internal organization of equivalent academic units evidenced slight variation across the three universities. As has been elucidated in the previous section, organization of academic units such as college, faculty and department in the former system was based on ideals drawn from representative and collective leadership. In the new arrangement, this typical organization has been transformed. At college level, though there is a moderate difference from university to university, the move in all the three universities marked a collective departure from the simple collegial based structure to a more complex structure in which domineering arrangements are put in place of the former collegial arrangements. For instance, in AAU the most important governing body for administrative issues at college level in place of the previous College Academic Commission (AC) is College Council which is a broad forum for holding consultations among the academic units grouped under the leadership of a college director. The council brings together not only academic leaders (Dept/Unit chairs, deans, directors, and assistant deans/directors) but also heads of administrative services, senior faculty members of the academic units and student representatives under a college (AAU 2011 & 2010).

Figure 8 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement



A slightly different trend has been evidenced in HU where college level bodies are pushed to the periphery as academic decision making power is devolved to the basic academic units - schools. Thus, except in those cases where the establishment of the units is exceptional, e.g. College of Agriculture, College of Health Science and Wondo Genet College of Forestry, practically there is no longer medium level management body standing between the university level governing bodies and the schools. Formally, colleges are delineated to serve as a forum for delivery of administrative services and galvanization of academic resources (HU 2008b & 2008c).

In a different leaning, college is designated to have a more direct role in the academic decision making process in the case of MU. Most of the former faculties are now promoted to a college status. At the heart of college governance is a College Council, which is designated as the highest academic body next to the university senate. The college council mimics the roles of the former Academic Commission (AC). As its predecessor, it is chaired by a dean who holds office up on appointment by president. Membership to the council is designated by virtue of position held. In line with this, college dean, department heads, heads of college level research centers, leader of quality assurance team, one staff representative, one student representative, one senior staff and leader of college support team form the council's membership by default (MU 2008a, 2008b and 2008c).

Figure 9 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new HU organizational arrangement

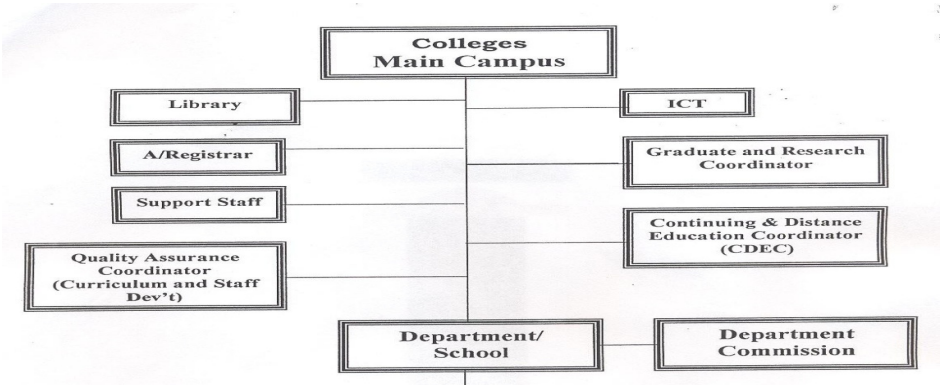
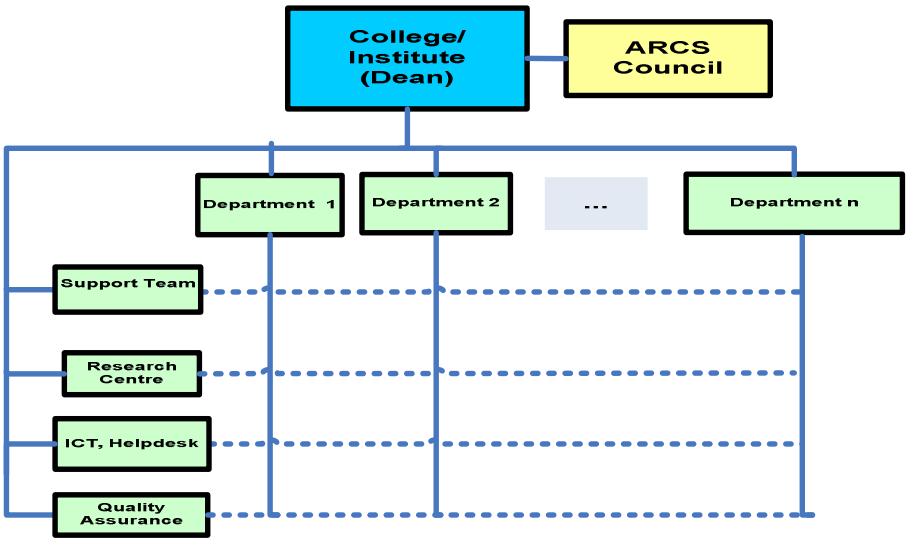


Figure 10 - Prototype of a College Organization in the new MU organizational arrangement



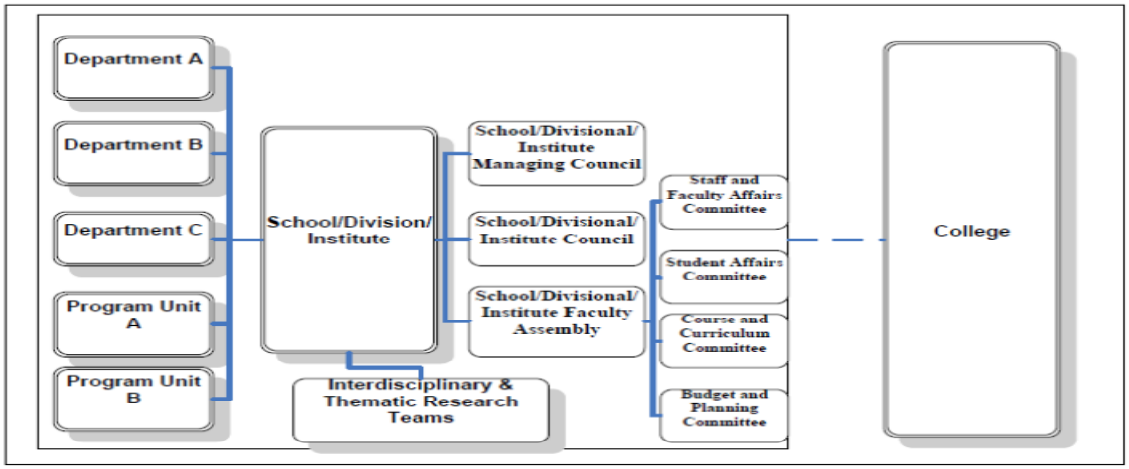
All in all, college in the new system, with a minor exception in MU, is deemed to be an administrative forum for delivery of administrative services, development of interschool or interfaculty programs, and availability of academic programs for students across disciplines. Thus, unlike the previous system in which college used to have strong stake in academic and administrative decision making, the powers of colleges is now limited to administrative service areas that have been defined for it.

The next level in the hierarchy is the operating level units where the basic academic undertakings reside. In this regard, academic units in the previous system used to be established based on disciplinary boundary with each disciplinary/academic program

having its own department units. Thus, the number of departments an institution accommodated was linearly related to the number of degree programs that institution offered with a creation of new degree programs leading to proliferation of new department in the respective faculty or college. For instance, before the BPR reform, AAU alone had more than 70 departments, while Mekele and Hawassa had 44 and 46 departments respectively (AAUb 2011, HU 2009 & MU 2011). As is evidenced in the universities' preliminary assessment for the BPR initiative, this departmental organization is found to be structurally outdated (See AAU 2009b, HU 2008b & MU 2008c). The organization of academic units should be permissive of greater integration and harmonization of programs, greater interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary interactions, greater linkage of graduate and undergraduate programs and greater integration of teaching and research. It should also make movement of students and faculty across programs easier while avoiding excessive replication of departmental units and duplication of effort. In view of these points, the then disciplinary based system was reported to have acute shortcomings (AAU 2009b, HU 2008b & MU 2008c). Accordingly, after the BPR initiative, most of the universities followed a trend of merging their basic academic units according to their similarities (See AAU 2011a &2010, HU 2008b & 2008c, MU 2008b & 2008c). As it overrides the ideals embodied in the previous proclamation, this trend eventually necessitated redefining the respective legal provision. In line with this, the law has been redressed in such a way that institutions can form basic academic units in cluster form rather than based on only a single discipline (see Article 18, sub-article 1 of HEP NO.659/2009: 4986). With this, the conception of Academic Department as dignifying a single discipline and single academic program has become obsolete. Now they normally accommodate more than one study program.

Complimentary to this orientation, departments are now promoted to school status. With this, their organization has become more complex as new bodies and positions are created to supplement this change. In this regard, the structure of academic units across the three universities marked relative difference between AAU and the other two universities.

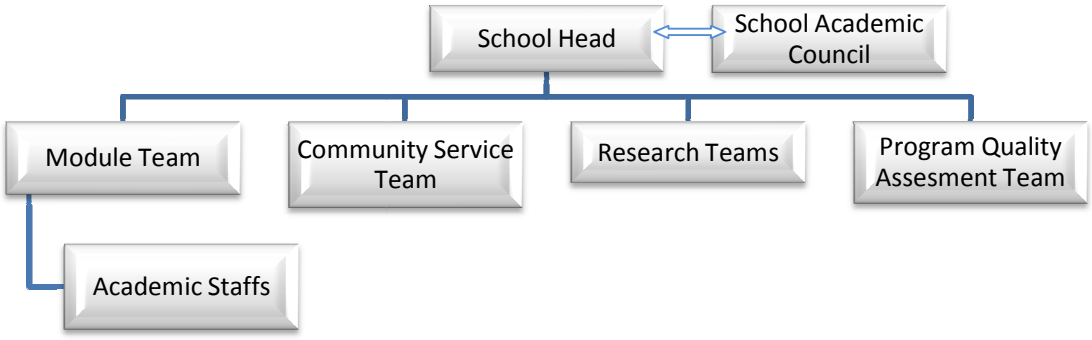
Figure 11 - Prototype of a Faculty/School Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement



In the case of AAU, schools are designated to have three main governing bodies with differing level of authority in terms of legislative, regulative and executive role. At the center of a School is the School's Staff Assembly with the highest legislative and regulative power. It is congregation of the entire staff of a school. It has the duty of formulating the respective school's bylaws and policies on academic matters in consonance with the university legislation. Unlike university and college level bodies where the university president and college directors chair their respective bodies, School Assembly is headed by a chairperson the assembly appoints by collective agreement. The director of the respective school serves as the assembly's secretary with enforcing the assembly's decisions being his/her primary responsibility (AAU 2010 & 2011). The other most important governing body at this level is the Academic Commission (AC) that functions on behalf of a School's Staff Assembly when the latter is not in session. It is composed of elected members from among School Assembly and chaired by chairperson appointed by the School Assembly with the respective dean/director serving as secretary of the AC. At the heart of a school administration is School's Managing Council as a collection of executive officers with a mandate to advise the director of the school. It is composed of the chairs of Program Units, Heads of Centers and some selected academic staff and administrative officers of a school that the director chooses. It is analogous to the management council chaired by the President at central university level. It does not have decision-making powers but only to advise director of a school on matters that s/he wishes to counsel on (AAU 2010 & 2011).

The understructure of Mekele University (MU) and Hawassa University (HU) marks high degree of similarity. The degree of similarity casts question whether the institutions modeled their understructure after common prototype. No new governing bodies have been added. Each school is designated to have Academic Council functionally similar to the then Department Council. The council is composed of Team Leaders in a School with the chairmanship of appointed School Head. Unlike the previous simple and mechanical structure in which leader of an academic unit is the only executive force, the leadership position is now supplemented by additional support structures and positions deemed to be helpful for efficient and effective performance. In line with this, the new structure envisions the creation of a number of academic teams such as Streams/Module Teams, Research Center and Teams, and Program Quality Assessment Team with each group having a mandate to manage activities in its respective area under the leadership of department head. In line with this organization, unlike the previous tradition where all academic staffs of a given department are pooled together under one department head, academic staffs within a school are organized internally into a number of Streams/Course/Module Teams according to their specialization. Each team has team leader who constitute membership for the respective School's Academic Council. In line with this, academic decision making in a school begins in a given specialization team and those issues discussed on team level will be endorsed to the respective School's Academic Council for decision (MU 2008b, MU 2008c, HU 2008b and HU 2008c).

Figure 12 - Prototype of School structure in the new HU and MU organizational arrangement



All in all, the organization of academic units in Ethiopian HEIs after BPR as revealed by the targeted universities' new structure involved both selective regeneration of what exists

and creative adaptation of new elements. The form, composition and function of academic units across the three universities have been more or less transformed in a similar manner except in AAU where provisions for both the new domineering trend and the former collegial tradition are blended. In all the three universities, academic units that had traditionally been running separate programs in similar areas are now streamlined together as one academic unit. This marked the eventual demise of the conception of department as a single discipline/single academic program. Complimentary to this, decision-making both in administrative and academic sphere has been devolved to the academic units in a way thought to avoid unnecessary and expensive arrangements and waste of resources. Even though the vertical hierarchies of legislative, regulatory and executive power give way to laterally collegial structures in all the three universities, the structures and bodies in Hawassa University and Mekele University medium levels in general and lower levels in particular have been found to be selective as it is not inclusive and accessible to all academic staffs. In a similar inclination, hegemony of domineering relation has been evidenced as academic leadership positions become tenured. This has also been reinforced further by the mammoth administrative and academic power academic executives are granted. In a modestly different inclination, in AAU, a relative leaning to reinforce the collegial and participatory structures has been evidenced not only by the creation of new governing bodies in which all academic staffs are directly included but also by the fact that the supreme governing bodies at each level are chaired by elected chairman.

4.2.3 Autonomy and Patterns of Power Distribution in Academic Units

Central to the bottom heavy conception of universities is the autonomy of academic units in a sense that they are not governed top-down through chains of command that cascade decisions from higher to lower echelons. As opposed to the traditional single-line bureaucracy, each unit in a university structure is normally deemed to have its own autonomy though hierarchically accountable to bodies at higher levels. This tradition is different from country to country and institution to institution. As is the case elsewhere, in the Ethiopian HE system the autonomy of internal academic units emanates from the statutory (See Article 18, Sub-article 2 of HEP No.650/2009:4986). However, the statutory provides only general stipulation leaving particulars to be determined by the respective institution. Hence, individual institutions may differ in the range and scope of

decision-making powers they allow their academic units to exercise. In this regard, as has been documented in the universities preliminary assessment before the BPR initiative, autonomy of academic units was highly circumscribed (see AAU 2011, HU 2008b & MU 2008c). Two related rationales can be thought with respect to this. The first could be the fact that the status of most of the academic units in the previous system was designated as department. Though these units are formally deemed to enjoy substantial autonomy academically, their financial and administrative autonomy in particular has conventionally been insignificant. Second, the over-centralization of authority in the hands of central executives heavily undermined the autonomy of academic units. Though the heart of decision-making at each level is formally delineated to lie in the collegial academic bodies, a steady drift of power in favor of institutional leaders was found to have been a trend over the years (Ibid). Owing to these facts, academic units in Ethiopian HEIs had long been not in a position to enjoy their statutorily granted autonomy.

As a means to cleanse this corrosion, an inclination to empower the units has been evidenced after the BPR reform (see AAU 2011, HU 2008c & MU 2008b). The universities, as elaborated in the previous section, opted for the flat school organization of academic units in place of the previous department based organization. School organization endows academic units with full administrative, financial and academic control over process within the scope of their academic undertakings. Despite this common trend, relative institutional difference has been marked as far as the delineation of power distribution between the regulative and executive bodies within the academic units is concerned. In this regard, of the three universities, AAU stood out for having a very peculiar structure in which effort to balance power between executives and regulative bodies has been done. For instance, academic leaders such as schools heads are articulated as having responsibility to execute the decisions made by their respective collective academic councils. In a similar but more peculiar way, unlike the previous tradition in which academic councils at different level are headed by deans and department heads, chairmanship of academic councils is appointed by the respective council's members vote (AAU 2011). In the case of the other two universities, an inclination to push assembles of academic councils to the periphery has been evidenced. As opposed to their traditional role of dictating decision in every aspect of governance in their respective unit, the power of such councils is now reduced except on core academic issues where they still have the mandate to dictate decision. Academic position holders such as school head by virtue of

their position are given more power to enforce decision especially on administrative issues. Only on those matters presumed to be essential (especially those which are academic in nature and hence, needs collective examination) that they have the obligation to seek the decision of their respective academic council (HU 2008c & MU 2008b).

However, this relative difference among the individual institutions disappears when it comes to the selection of academic leaders. As opposed to the previous system, in all the three universities, academic leaders such as college deans and school heads are no longer elected. Rather, they are to be appointed on tenure basis by the respective university management based on meritocratic criteria. Moreover, their position as an executive managerialist leader is boasted though the degree is found to vary from institution to institution with AAU being the least responsive to this. Their position is further strengthened by the spiraling of their power in evaluating the performance of academic and non-academic staffs under their unit (see AAU 2011, HU 2008c & MU 2008b). Hence, the role of executives is now changed from representative executives to commanding ones that are more accountable to hierarchical bodies than collegial academic councils.

The move to empower academic leaders is applaudable as it enables institutions to cope up with potential drawbacks of over-centralization and tortuous collegial processes. Nevertheless, the presence of well-articulated framework is not necessarily a measure of guarantee for the exercise of the formally outlined stipulations as the provisions laid by the formal system are conditioned by contextual realities. A good case in point is the scenario before the reform initiative. Back then, as clarified elsewhere in this study, practicability of governance as laid by the law had always been a problem. Therefore, a thorough analysis of empirical functioning of the new arrangement is needed to grasp how far the power devolution endeavor is practically put into action. In this regard, most of the interviewees are found to have reservation. The first group of interviews forwarded their concern in relation to the government's commitment to the ideals of power devolution. The following interview response represents typical view in this category.

> *Many academic decisions including program expansion and curriculum review are still heavily influenced by ministry of education. Let alone departments and faculties at the lower level, even the university leadership itself does not have the real authority when it comes to initiating new programs, curriculum revision and admitting students. They do it in accordance with the detailed*

directives given by the ministry office. For instance, the admission of students to graduate program is determined by ministry of education. No individual institution and department has a say on it. The departments that harbor the concerned program are obliged to admit students assigned by the government irrespective of whether the assigned students fulfill the admission criteria set for the respective program of study. The worst part is not only this but also the fact that they are forced to take in a much larger number of students than what they actually can accommodate. (Interviewee 2, AAU)

Indeed, astute assessment of governments' practice after the reform does not defy the doubt on its commitment. The government is still censured for undermining institutions and their units' autonomy as the arbitrary authority over various internal affairs of the HEIs is still evident (see Assefa 2008, Gemeda 2008, Mehari 2010, US 2009 and 2010).

Putting the perspective of those respondents who relate the autonomy of academic units to lack of government's commitment aside, we find another pool of respondents fully concentrated on the practical experience they encounter in the day to day operation of their respective universities. Most of the respondents from this group applauded the endeavor to instill the ideals of decentralization and a handful of them even went on to pointing to constructive developments.

The idea of promoting departments' autonomy is agreeable by all constituents in the university community. This is not a new issue. It has been around beginning from the inception of the sector and the provisions for this have been included in the law. The initial experience in the BPR initiative so far is somehow constructive. The university incumbents showed their commitment not only by promoting the reform initiative but also by taking the initiative to practically pursue the ideals embodied in the reform though the process may not be as smooth as thought. (Interviewee 1, MU)

Nonetheless, majority of the interviewees had reservation when it comes to the practical aspects of the reform though they are in absolute content with the essence of the endeavor. According to them, the most pressing threat to the autonomy of units is not external but internal. Their response reveals the trend of university leaders to regard their offices as dominions of power from where they micromanage operating level units. The following interview responses represent the typical view in this regard.

Schools are formally acknowledged to have the mandate to decide on issues within the scope of their discipline. … However, often times, this provision is limited only in paper as academic officers in the higher level override departments intentionally or non-intentionally. Sometimes they force schools to

take decision in favor of a given issues and other times they ignore schools' decision. (Interviewee 3, MU)

The autonomy granted to academic unit has often been subject to central executives' sarcastic action. They are selective. They opt to refer to the new structure only in those matters that appeared to be in line with their interest. They respect lower units' decision only on those matters that appear to be less important to them and on those issues where the decision of the respective academic unit is in line with their intent. (Interviewee 4, HU)

Table 3 - Academic staffs' perception towards the level of centralization/decentralization in their respective university academic wing

Name of Institution		Name of Institution			Combined Average	Ch-square value
		AAU	HU	MU		
Selecting College and School level academic leaders	**Mean**	**2.79**	**2.45**	**1.86**	**2.34**	0.046
	N	24	29	29	82	
Selecting new faculty	**Mean**	**2.33**	**2.21**	**1.83**	**2.13**	0.357
	N	24	29	24	77	
Faculty promotion/tenure decisions	**Mean**	**2.29**	**2.31**	**2.96**	**2.53**	0.102
	N	24	29	28	81	
Determining use of resources	**Mean**	**2.42**	**2.17**	**2.93**	**2.51**	0.047
	N	24	29	29	82	
Approving new academic programs and courses	**Mean**	**3.29**	**2.52**	**3.04**	**2.93**	0.108
	N	24	29	28	81	
Deciding on routine academic issues	**Mean**	**2.87**	**2.62**	**3.45**	**2.99**	0.184
	N	23	29	29	81	
Composite decentralization/centralization variable created by the average of the six statements*	**Mean**	**2.65**	**2.38**	**2.58**		

Note *– Respondents were asked to assess the level of centralization/decentralization in their respective university academic wing in relation to the aforementioned statements on a five point scale that runs from extremely centralized (1) to extremely decentralized (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university and the 6 column shows combined average value for all the three universities while the last provides the Chi-square test values between the independent variable, university, and the respective decision making areas to see if there is statistically significant pattern that makes any of the universities different from others (See Appendix A-2). In order to reduce the number of responses having less than 5 cell count, the five point scale response label is re-grouped into a three point scale that runs from Dissatisfied Centralized to Decentralized. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as more centralized and > 3.5 as more decentralized. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as blend of both.*

* *All the values for each of the six decision making areas are pooled together to create composite indicator variable that, in general terms, show staffs perception towards decision making in their respective university academic wing. It is hoped that this composite variable shows staffs' perception in general terms as it is the product of their own self-rating for the respective decision making areas.*

This frustration of interviewees is somehow reflected in the response of academic staffs. Academic staffs from the three universities were asked to assess whether decisions in their institution in relation to certain academic issues are dictated dominantly by central management. The result, as shown in Table 5 reveals a more or less similar perception. With all mean scores being lower than 3.5 for all the decision making areas, no perception towards decentralization is observed in any of the statements. Rather, majority of the decision-making areas, except decision on academic routines and approval of academic programs, are perceived by the staffs as being somewhat centralized. However, a closer look at of the figures for each institution across the six decision-making areas shows that there is moderate difference in between AAU on one side and the other two universities on the other side as AAU's figures lean positively in relative terms. The Chi-square values computed to determine whether or not this pattern is statistically significant are far greater than the reliability 0.01 level making the interpretation made by the descriptive analysis safe.

All these concerns point to the customary paradox in decentralization. It is normal for the upper bodies to lose control over some aspects to the extent the lower bodies are promoted to be autonomous. This may, however, prompt higher level leaders who are accustomed to command and control style of governance to resist the move consciously or unconsciously. This in turn may lead to winds of recentralization even when the efforts of decentralization rhetorically continue. The question is therefore maintaining the desired balance that enables upper bodies to more efficiently and effectively coordinate the efforts of lower units without compromising the autonomy of the latter. In such provisions, the role of the central administration should be that of strategic in a sense that they act in a way that influence not the day-to-day routines but the long run behavior and actions of units. The way top management adjust their new roles is thus critical to the reform success.

As opposed to the views reflected so far, few interviewees labeled departments as the major setbacks for effective implementation of the provisions laid by the new system. They stressed that the pinpointed problem is confined not only in the central leaders but also in the academic units themselves. The following interview response of one school head is the typical one among the interview responses under this category.

The BPR initiative has devolved power to the lower levels. However, in practice, they are not empowered. This is so not only because of the central management bodies but also the units themselves. Those in the higher hierarchy are filled with the old state of mind. So are the lower level units. We at the lower levels usually refer to the approval and consultation of central leaders in making decisions when in fact the issue under consideration is within the scope of our jurisdiction. So, in my view, the problem resides in both the upper and the lower bodies. (Interviewee 3, HU)

Indeed, there is no problem with consulting the upper level in crucial and relevant aspects but if it is meant for seeking approval and decision making even in those areas deemed to be within the jurisdiction of lower units, it would be self-defeating. The presence of such habits shows how past rules of thumb affect actors' behavior within the new framework. It shows what role the leadership of individual universities needs to play. The central leaders have strong role to play not only in transferring authority and resources to the units but also guarding against any intentional or non-intentional intrusion that endangers the units' autonomy and thereby boost the confidence of lower level officers to act independently within the scope of their responsibility area.

In general terms, the qualitative analysis along with the quantitative made so far suggests the presence of discrepancy between what has formally been articulated and what has practically been put in place. Hence, it can be said that even though decision-making bodies from central university level all the way to operating level units are established in a way that enable the devolution of authority from higher to lower levels, in practical terms, the lower units are being entangled with centralization of administrative and academic decisions and arbitrary interference in their routines by top university and government incumbents. This tells that the empirical functioning of the new system is far from what it ought to be.

4.2.4 Staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes

Central to the governing of universities is its participatory structures through which faculties take active part in institutional management and decision-making processes. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, the formal framework for institutional governance in Ethiopian universities before the BPR initiative is erected on structures that emphasize the importance of faculty involvement in a wide range of institutional management and

academic decisions. Nevertheless, practical account of the sector's experience revealed how the ideals embodied in the formal framework have gradually become an exception than a rule (see AAU 2011, HU 2008b & MU 2008c). The essence of the BPR reform was thus not questionable. All interviewees manifested their content with the reform initiative blatantly. This view has also been reflected among the academic staff respondents. As shown below in Table 4, majority of the academic staffs perceived the initiative positively though a handful of them shown reservation especially in MU. Even among those respondents who have reservation, majority responded that they were indifferent regarding the initiative, making the proportion of those who palpably reacted against the initiative insignificant. Thus, in general terms, it can be said that the staffs of the universities did not ponder to pose setback with respect to the reform initiative.

Table 4 - Perception of academic staffs on the essence of reform

	How do you agree on the essence of such radical reform in Ethiopian Universities?							
Label	Name of Institution							
	AAU		HU		MU		Agregate	
	Freq	Cum %	Freq	Cum %	Frequ	Cum %	Freq	Cum %
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	5	17.2	3	11.1	10	12.5
Agree	11	54.2	13	62.1	9	44.4	33	53.8
Indifferent	6	79.2	7	86.2	5	63.0	18	76.3
Disagree	5	100	2	93.1	8	92.6	15	95.0
Strongly Disagree	0	100	2	100	2	100	4	100.0
Total	24		29		27		80	

Note *–The respondents were asked whether they agree on the essence of BPR reform in Ethiopian Universities on a five point scale that runs from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). The figures in main column headings 2-4 shows the proportion of respondents per university and the 5th column shows combined average proportion for all the three universities.*

Having such consensus in a time where the universities are trying to transform their system is vital. However, this collective stand does not hold when it comes to the participation of staffs in the reform initiative. The universities' officials claim that they maneuvered the reform in a way that participate staffs. In this regard, they point to the orientation of BPR implementation as foundation on which staff participation is revitalized. Each individual institution claimed to have included staffs as core members of the BPR teams (AAU 2011, HU 2008b and MU 2008c). Indeed, BPR implementation in the country's public institutions can be thought to be more participatory and inclusive than

other reform initiatives preceding it. However, this does not emanate from the conviction of the universities' incumbents; neither did it emerge from the government's commitment. It emanates from the nature of BPR as a reform tool. As opposed to other top-down reform tools, BPR in its very nature is a micro-management tool that targets revolutionizing individual institution's internal dynamics by a cross-functional teams composed of professionals from the respective functional areas to be reengineered (see Davenport & Short 1990, Hammer and Champy 1993, Johansson et al 1993; Towers 1994 and Furey 1993).This grass-root blended orientation requires departing away from the linear hierarchical top-down conception of implementation. Maassen & Van Vught (2002) stressed that in circumstances where the center's controlling capacity is to a large extent limited; the traditional top-down bureaucratic ways are impractical. Rather, it needs the conception of synthesized participatory approach in which both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives are intermingled in such a way that all organizational constituents are incorporated in the processes instead of the elitist influencing the whole process from above.

Table 5 - Perception of academic staffs on their participation in the reform initiative in their respective university

How do you rate the participation of academic staffs in the BPR reform initiative at your university?								
Label	Name of Institution						Agregate Total	
	Addis Ababa University		Hawassa University		Mekele University			
	Freq	Com %	Freq	Com %	Freq	Com %	Freq	Com %
Extremely low	0	0	6	20.7	11	37.9	17	20.7
Low	14	58.3	13	65.5	8	65.5	35	63.4
Moderate	9	95.8	8	93.1	8	93.1	25	93.9
High	1	100.0	2	100.0	2	100.0	5	100.0
Extremly High	0	100.0	0	100.0	0	100.0	0	100.0
Total	24		29		29		82	

Note *– The respondents were asked to assess the level of their participation in implementing the reform initiative in their respective university on a five point scale that runs from extremely low (1) to extremely high (5). The figures in main column headings 2-4 shows the proportion of respondents per university and the 5th column shows combined average proportion for all the three universities.*

Even though the orientation pursued goes hand in glove with the peculiar characteristics of HEIs inherent character - organizational fragmentation, the diffusion of the decision-making power and the grassroots character of innovations, majority of the interviewees

pointed that the reform initiative is not participatory and fluid as it ought to be. The following extracts from the interview responses are a good indication of the typical perception of respondents on the issue.

> *Relative to previous reforms, BPR reform can be said to be more participatory in principle.... But when I take into account the way it was put in place in our university, I dare to say that it is not participatory. BPR teams in our university are set up in such a way that mostly position holders and individuals related or intimate to the incumbents in one way or another are included. ... The process of selecting team members is not transparent. The reform is planned by a handful of few staffs that are selected this way.... I personally don't think that people selected this way are representative to the university community. With this fact in hand, it is difficult to say that the staff is adequately participated in the reform initiative. (Interviewee 1 AAU)*

> *I would say staff's participation is limited. Only a handful staffs participated in the reform process. Even from those who took part, majority are participated only in the teaching-learning process. ... Of course, there were training and feedback sessions and I believe this is a kind of experience that must be reinforced. ... In these meetings, a number of feedbacks in relation to the implementation of the proposed system were raised by many staffs and the university incumbents promised to integrate those legitimate feedbacks. However, when the reform is put in place at the end of the day, none of the given feedbacks was incorporated into the proposed system; neither did the issues agreed to be taken care before the implementation of the reform. The incumbents simply tried to push their own agenda down without any compromise. (Interviewee 4, HU)*

As can be observed from Table 5 in the previous page, similar tone of discontent is found in the perception of academic staffs. Majority of them are found to have reservation. The trend across the three universities does not differ as only a handful of the respondents in each university rate their participation as moderate.

When it comes to the provisions for staff participation in the new structure, astute examination divulges paradoxical patterns. In some aspects, the new arrangement can be thought to provide staffs with greater opportunity to participate in governing bodies. From another perspective, contradictory inclination that might pose threat to staff participation can be evidenced. A good case in point is the provisions for the participation of academic staffs in university level governing bodies- senate and university council. As has been discussed elsewhere, academic staffs' participation in university senate in the previous legislation is limited to two representatives with all other members of the senate being ex-officio members. Contrary to this, the new statutory designates university senate and

university council to be primarily composed of academic staffs (see Article 50 and 56, HEP No.650/2009:5014). This when seen in its facade view may point to the proclivity of the new arrangement for improved staff participation.

However, careful review of the statutory reveals how staff participation is brought under the sphere of incumbents' discretion as the decision on who joins these bodies vest in the hands of university president. Two issues emerge out of this. The first is a concern of how far such personal authority would be practiced in accordance with the objective criteria set by the law. The statutory requires the process of selecting would-be members to base on purely meritorious criteria. However, when the final decision on matters of such importance vests in the hands of a single individual, it enhances the ability of the individual holding the decisive position to have edge over collective regulatory bodies and this in turn poses potential setback to accountability. The fact that Ethiopia is a country where transparent and democratic governance is not practiced and authority is usually twisted arbitrarily in personal terms adds fuel to the dilemma. Secondly, even in standard democracies, where transparency and rule of law dictates, a move from election to appointment is empirically evidenced to signify accompanying change in accountability structure (see Besley and Coate 2003, Fields et al 1997, Maskin and Tirole 2001). Elected position holders are reported to behave in a manner different from their appointed counter parts. When positions are held through election process, it would mean that the respective constituency has direct input. This under normal circumstances makes elected position holders more responsive to and representative of their constituency as they need support to get re-elected or could be revoked from their position if they lack the trust of their constituency. Whereas, if they are appointed, there will be an insulating layer with their constituency as their stance is not dependent on their constituency but appointing body. This in turn makes their action bundled with the interests of the appointing elites and their own intrinsic motivations rather than their constituency's interest (Ibid). Taken from this perspective, this casts doubt whether academic staffs selected to the senate and university council by the bureaucracy incline to promote the interest of their respective academic community. A good concern in point is the following interview response, which is already used elsewhere in this study to reflect on related aspect-

> *I don't understand the rationale why university president is given the dominion of choosing majority of senate members. This may transplant a potential incongruity that may endanger the*

participatory and collective decision making within the senate. Through time, presidents may tend to use their right as a power base to avoid challenges from the members of senate by designating only those academics that they can easily manipulate. (Interviewee 1, AAU).

Similar change in the accountability structure down in the hierarchy can be expected. As discussed elsewhere thoroughly, in the former system, academic leaders below presidency level were subject to staffs' election. Nonetheless, in the new system this practice has been replaced by tenured system in which position holders are to be appointed by the respective bureaucratic leader. According to the afore-discussed perspective, this would transplant change in the responsiveness of school heads/ deans. Some staffs claimed to have already felt the winds. The following interview response is among the forwarded concerns.

Academic leaders these days are acting as bossy. I don't know, perhaps it is because they get their position by competition rather than by election. In the old days, they used to be seen as colleagues. But these days, that is apparently changing as I perceived it in my own experience. (Interviewee 4, HU)

When it comes to the participation of staffs in middle level bodies such as college and school councils, no apparent change has been evidenced except in AAU where more participatory structures are designated. In AAU, unlike the previous traditions which restricts the membership of college level governing bodies to ex-officio members, academic staffs are now entitled to the membership of the college governing bodies. For instance, college council is designated to bring not only all academic officers but also all senior faculty members of the academic units under a college. In a more indulgent trend, in the next hierarchy - School level, the supreme academic governing body, Staff Assembly, is formed as congregation of all academic staffs in the faculty (see AAU 2011 & 2010 for detail). As opposed to this, in the other two universities no change has been evidenced in the composition of governing bodies at medium level. At Hawassa University, as departments are promoted to assume more authority, the middle (college) level body has been called off except in College of Agriculture and Wondogenet Forestry College, where college is still designated to have its traditional role in academic governance (HU 2008a & HU 2008c). In Mekele University, college level governing bodies are delineated in such a way that they would bring all academic officers in the college together (MU 2008a & MU 2008b). Thus, staff representative by virtue of their

position are allowed to have representation in the council. Apart from that, no other provision has been stipulated for inclusion of staffs. At the understructure of Hawassa University and Mekele University, an even tighter tendency is noticed. Before the BPR initiative, all academic staffs under a given department were entitled to the membership of their respective unit's governing body. However, this practice is completely abandoned in the new system. Now the governing body in the lower academic units, School Council, is composed of streams/ module team leaders, research unit/team leaders, research and program quality assessment team leaders and staff and student representatives. Academic staffs with no leadership position in any of these teams are exclusively filtered out of the council. Their participation is confined only in their respective team where they can participate on academic matters within their specialization. However, in practical terms, this formal framework has not been implemented wholly in all institutions. The following interview response is a good instance in this regard.

> *Even though the new arrangement requires schools to organize their academic staffs in accordance with modular teams specialization, this has not yet been implemented in all units in our university due to implementation complexities. As a means to curb up this, each degree program under our school is assigned program coordinators under whom staffs are organized. This is an informal structure which we use until we organize staffs according to the formal specialization based arrangement. Owing to this, school council could not be organized as delineated in the legislation but more or less similar pattern emerged as most schools opt to include only program coordinators and few senior staffs. Hence, not all academic staffs are members of schools councils. (Interviewee 3, HU)*

With all these in mind, it can be said that a more selective provision that circumscribe staff's participation is instilled at the understructure of the two universities hierarchy. Contrary to this, in the case of AAU, the participatory structures designated for college level found their way down to academic units. Hence, as is the case at college level, school's supreme governing body is formed as congregation of all staffs under the respective school. Thus, in comparison to Mekele University and Hawassa University, where the provisions for staff participation are found to be circumscribed procedurally, Addis Ababa University can be said to infuse more inclusive structures.

In an effort to grasp how far the practical experience is in line with the formal delineation, both groups of respondents, academic leaders and staffs, were asked to give their perception regarding staffs' participation in academic governance after the BPR reform. Most of the academic leaders pointed out that there have been no significant change

except minor modifications. Though they admit that some of the provisions could constrain fluid staff participation, they claimed the presence of active staff interaction. The following interview responses are the ones in reference to this view.

> *The participation of staffs was supposed to be better from the previous system. However, in practical terms, I have to confess the continuity of the status quo. Even though there are provisions for staffs' participation in the new system, not all such provisions are put in place owing to a wide range of institutional problems. But then again, the participation of staff even in the previous system is not that bad. We had and still have the experience of active staff participation in academic decisions, though I would not say that what we have right now is faire enough. (Interviewee 2, AAU)*

> *The academic decision making is formally devolved to the lower academic units. The participation of staff in school's governing bodies is however more selective in the new system than in the previous. Back then, academic staffs had the right to membership of their respective departmental governing bodies by virtue of their academic tenure. Now membership to such councils is based on position, it is not open to all staffs. However, within this bounded framework, I would say, staffs' participation in our school is good. (Interviewee 3, MU)*

As opposed to the sympathetic view of majority of the academic leaders, a more pessimist response has been reflected by a few of those at the lowest level - program coordinators. The following response is an exemplary in point of this.

> *… The reality on the ground is quite different. I can even say that a more aggravated situation has emerged. For example, the council in which staffs have representation is not active as we have had only two or three council session this year. Had it been according to the university's legislation, it should have been conducted biweekly. The head makes most of the decisions exclusively. That is the emerging trend. (Interviewee 3, MU)*

In order to incorporate the perception of academic staffs, faculties were asked to assess their participation in their respective university. They were presented with a set of statements relating to their relationship with academic leaders, and specific institutional management and decision-making processes. In the discussion to follow, these statements are pooled into three categories according to their focus– staff-leader relationship, structural provisions for staffs' participation and emerging leadership practice.

Table 6 - Staffs' perception regarding their relationship with academic leaders in their respective institution

Statement		Name of Institution			Combined Average
		AAU	HU	MU	
Academic leaders have much authoritative power to influence staffs and their respective academic councils in the current system than in the previous system.	**Mean**	**3.71**	**3.69**	**3.72**	**3.71**
	N	24	29	29	82
Communication between the academic staffs and academic leaders is good in the existing system than in the former one	**Mean**	**2.33**	**2.24**	**2.00**	**2.18**
	N	24	29	29	82
Compared to the experience in the previous system, I am kept more informed about what is going on at this institution.	**Mean**	**2.75**	**3.28**	**3.31**	**3.13**
	N	24	29	29	82

Note *– Respondents were asked to give their rating in relation to the statement presented on a five point scale that runs from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university. The figure between under the row N refers to the number of valid answers. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as disagreement and > 3.5 as agreement. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as indifferent. The averaged values for each of the three statements across the three universities does not differ that much as the values for each statement fell in one interpretation scheme. The data set has been re-examined by cross tabulation and percentage analysis in order to see if there is any pattern that is overlooked by the averaged values and no different pattern has been found. Hence, the average values can be used reliably.*

As shown in Table 6, three statements are labeled under the first category. In reference to the first statement, the average values in all the three universities are found to lie a bit away from the neutral zone, meaning that academic leaders are perceived to have much authoritative power to influence staffs and their respective academic councils in the current system than in the previous. As opposed to their higher rating for academic leaders' power, the staffs revealed their discontent when it comes to their relation with their respective academic leaders. The average value for all the three universities in this regard are found to be far below the neutral zone with MU hitting the lowest at average score 2.00. Relating the interpretation for these two statements with what has already been uncovered by the analysis of the formal framework in the initial section of this portion brings out interesting issue. In the analysis of the formal framework, an inclination to implant more powerful executive leadership has been uncovered. Coupling this with the afore-discussed perception of staffs pose a question of whether the winds of power change have already been felt by the staffs. With respect to the third statement, the staffs are

found to have a more lenient view as the scores for all the three universities lie in the neutral zone i.e. 2.5 -3.5, though AAU respondents are found to be slightly strained compared to HU and MU staffs as their average value lags far behind the score for the other two universities. This neutral interpretation of the staffs' observation to this statement would mean that they perceived no change in the newly adopted system with respect to the fluid flow of information among the different constituents within the universities.

When it comes to the structural provisions for staffs' participation, five of the statements shown in Table 7 are used as a measure to tap the issue. Each of these statements individually focuses on reflecting some particular aspects of the provisions for staff participation. They are complementary to one another. With this in mind, the scores for each of these statements are pooled together to create an additional 6th composite variable that, in general terms, indicates staffs' perception. In reference to the average score for each statement, as can be seen from the table, a more or less similar level of perception has been evidenced in all the three universities except in AAU where a more sympathetic view has been seen consistently for all the five statements. It is interesting to see this kind of difference. As has been clarified in the analysis for the formal framework, compared to the other two universities, AAU's framework is more inclusive. If this difference represents a statistically significant pattern, it indicates the reflection of the difference uncovered by the formal framework analysis in the staffs' perceptions. However, the higher Pearson Chi-square test values at 0.01 level between the independent variable, university, and the respective statements response categories indicates that the aforementioned difference does not reflect a statistically significant pattern (See Appendix A-4 for detailed test result). Besides, AAU's average value for the composite variable indicating the level of staff participation in general terms is much closer to the disagreement interpretation scheme. Thus, though the average scores for AAU are slightly higher than the other universities' average scores, it would be illogical to interpret AAU staffs' perception differently except the statement 'The academic decision-making process is now more collective and collegial than it was in the previous system' for which AAU's average score is considerably higher than HU and MU's scores. For this reason, the combined average values are preferred to interpret the staffs' perception in general terms. In this regard, as can be seen from the table, all the values lei below 2.5 indicating the wrecked perception of staffs regarding the structural provisions for their participation.

Table 7 - Academic staff's perceptions towards structural provisions for staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes in target universities

Statement		Name of Institution			Combined Average	Chi-square value
		AAU	HU	MU		
Lack of faculty involvment is not a problem in the university's current system in comparison to the previous one	**Mean**	2.63	2.50	2.24	2.44	0.062
	N	24	28	29	81	
The academic decision-making process is now more collective and collegial than it was in the previous system	**Mean**	2.92	2.41	2.03	2.43	0.064
	N	24	29	29	82	
In comparison to the previous system, staffs have stronger voice in decision making process of the current system	**Mean**	2.63	2.00	2.03	2.20	0.360
	N	24	29	29	82	
Staffs have adequate level of representation in governing bodies at each level in the new system than in the previous system	**Mean**	2.46	2.17	2.21	2.27	0.578
	N	24	29	29	82	
The new system has more open and suitable structures for consultation and participation of academic staffs in setting institutional goals, plans and policy decisions	**Mean**	2.54	2.14	2.24	2.29	0.320
	N	24	29	29	82	
Composite variable indicating the level of staff participation in institutional management and academic decision making processes in general terms*	**Mean**	2.58	2.25	2.14	2.31	
	N	24	28	29	81	

Note *– Respondents were asked to give their rating in relation to the statement presented on a five point scale that runs from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university and the 6 column shows combined average value for all the three universities while the last provides the Chi-square test values between the independent variable, university, and the respective statement to see if there is statistically significant pattern that makes the universities different from one another (See Appendix A-4 for detailed Chi-square test values). In order to reduce the number of responses having less than 5 cell count, the five point scale response label is re-grouped into a three point scale that runs from Dissatisfied Centralized to Decentralized. The figure between under the row N refers to the number of valid answers. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as disagreement and > 3.5 as agreement. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as indifferent.*

* *All the values for each of the five statements are pooled together to create composite indicator variable that, in general terms, show staffs' perception towards the structural provision for their participation in governance.*

In reference to the third category - leadership practice, two statements were sorted out as shown in Table 8. Regarding the first, staffs across all the three universities are found to be positively lenient as the average scores for all the three universities are inclined to be in the neutral interpretation zone 2.5-3.5. This would mean that in the new arrangement,

academic leaders are perceived to have an environment at least no bumpier compared to the previous system. However, the respondents are not impressed by the behavior of their academic leaders as the average score for all the three universities lie deep in the disagreement interpretation scheme.

Table 8– Staff's perception regarding leadership practice in their university

Statement		Name of Institution			Combined Average	Ch-square value
		AAU	HU	MU		
The new system capacitates academic leaders to provide competent leadership more effectively and efficiently than the previous system	**Mean**	3.58	3.28	2.93	3.24	0.029
	N	24	29	29	82	
Academic leaders are less autocratic and more collegial in the new system than the previous	**Mean**	2.25	2.17	2.14	2.18	0.655
	N	24	29	29	82	

Note *– Respondents were asked to give their rating in relation to the statement presented on a five point scale that runs from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university and the 6 column shows combined average value for all the three universities while the last provides the Chi-square test values between the independent variable, university, and the respective statement to see if there is statistically significant pattern that makes the universities different from one another (See Appendix A-5 for detail). The figure under the row N refers to the number of valid answers. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as disagreement and > 3.5 as agreement. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as indifferent.*

Table 9 - Opinion of academic staff with respect to responsiveness, participatory and flexibility of school level governance in their university's new system

Governance Dimension	Name of Institution			Combined average
	AAU	HU	MU	
Participatory	3.04	2.59	2.93	2.84
Responsiveness	2.71	2.17	2.66	2.50
Flexibility	2.50	2.17	2.17	2.27

Note *– The respondents were asked to appraise the academic unit level governance and management process at their respective university in relation to the identified dimensions based on a five point scale that runs from bad (1) to very good (5). The figures in columns 2-4 are average scores per university and the 5th column shows combined average value for all the three universities. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as dissatisfaction and > 3.5 as satisfaction. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as a neutral score.*

In general, the perception of academic staffs is found to tilt negatively compared to the academic leaders sympathetic view. This discontent is also evidenced in the staffs' response to the level of participatory, responsiveness and flexibility of governance practiced at the academic unit level. As can be observed from Table 9 in the previous page, the staffs are found to be not impressed with their school's/department's performance though AAU's staffs perception shows marginal distinction from the other two.

In a related aspect, the staffs were asked to give their opinion regarding the level of their influence on institutional management and academic decision-making processes in their respective universities. Though there are minor differences across the universities, as can be observed from Table 10, the overall perception is somehow similar. At all levels, their perception lied deep in the not influential interpretation zone. In related perspective, the level of their perception across the three universities marked apparent trend of declining as we move up hierarchically.

Table 10 - Staffs' perception regarding the level of their influence on institutional management and academic decision-making processes in their respective universities

Level	Name of Institution			Combined average
	AAU	HU	MU	
Institution level	2.58	2.66	2.66	2.63
Midium level – College, Faculty	2.08	1.97	2.17	2.07
Lower level – School and Program unit	1.54	1.46	1.62	1.54
Composite variable	2.24	2.18	2.31	2.23

Note *- Respondents were asked to rate the level of their influence on institutional management and academic decision-making processes in their respective universities at different levels on a five point scale that runs from least influential (1) to highly influential (5).The figures in columns 2-4 are average scores per university and the 5th column shows combined average value for all the three universities. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as not influential and > 3.5 as influential. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as moderate.*

In general, all these perceptions of the staffs coupled with the analysis of the formal framework for staff participation reveals how far staff participation is from being optimal. It would be interesting to see if the staffs' discontent is related to the reorganization of academic units or the sector's existing tradition. As has been clarified elsewhere in this study, the then departments were merged to form more vibrant units called schools. This

ultimately resulted in the increase in the span of control for each academic unit as the scope of their academic undertaking is expanded. Consequently, academic units now are reported to accommodate twofold or more staff than what they used to. This would ultimately lead to reduction in staff engagement under normal circumstance as it is improbable to have same level of participation when the units had narrow span of control. Even if the contribution of this towards lower staffs' participation is indisputable, as the uncovered trend suggest, the ultimate source of lower staff participation may also relate to the old officious rule of thumb which found its way into the new system.

4.2.5 Status of change in the universities

The ultimate issue in reform endeavor is whether change prevails or not (Gornitzka 1999). Changing formal frameworks does not automatically lead to new practices (see Musselin 2005). Understanding organizational change beyond the formal structures requires observation of actual practice and behavior at various levels within the HEIs (Kogan et al 2006). Providing comprehensive assessment in this regard is beyond this study in part owing to the study's descriptive nature and in part owing to the fact that change is too complicated and long-term bounded dynamics to be assessed as a function of single intervention over a relatively short period of time. Even then, within this bounded perspective, the analysis made so far draws attention to how inconsistent the practical experience is. Even though the reform orientation goes hand in glove with the higher education literature that the analysis of change in the universities should begin with taking into account the peculiar bottom heavy complex structure (Clark 1983; Birnbaum 1988), as the analysis in the preceding discussions suggest, the ideals and values embodied in the universities new structure are not finding their way in the universities' day-to-day dynamics. As a means to capture precise perception of both academic leaders and staffs on the issue, both groups were provided with the forum to solicit their opinion. In this regard, both groups forwarded their reservation, though the academic leaders group tended to be less pessimistic than their staff counterparts. The following interview response represents the typical view shared by most of the interviewees.

> *The reform process I would say is well done but when it comes to the subsequent outcomes, it depends on what and where you see. In some aspects you see the change dictating while in others the previous status quo dictates. For instance, if you see the practical aspects of how academic*

leaders assume their position, the role and composition of academic decision making bodies, the hierarchical relationship between different levels and the likes, the change is profound. But when you see other aspects such as the dynamics of decision-making in the academic units and the day to day activities, you don't see much change. All in all, I would say we are still overtaken by the old culture in many ways while trying to move forward with the new. (Interviewee 2, HU)

As already said, the academic staffs manifested an even more pessimistic view. Most of them unanimously perceived the status of the change in their universities as insignificant. As shown below in Table 11, the perception is more or less similar across all the three universities. Within the circumscribed view of insignificancy, the perception of staffs is found to take different form from Musselin's (2005) suggestion of prevalence of continuity of old ways as one move down in the hierarchy to the operating level units. Here, according to the staffs' perception, the middle level units are the ones where the impacts of the reform prevailed more profoundly than the institution and operating level units. All in all, as the perception of both groups indicate, the reform endeavor seems to be caught in setback.

Table 11 - Staff's perception regarding the level of change in their respective university

Level		Name of Institution			Combined average
		AAU	HU	MU	
Institution level	**Mean**	1.87	1.59	2.31	1.93
	N	24	29	29	82
Midium level – College, Faculty	**Mean**	2.37	2.69	3.03	2.72
	N	24	29	29	82
Lower level – School and Program unit	**Mean**	1.79	1.62	1.90	1.73
	N	24	29	29	82
Composite variable*	**Mean**	2.02	1.98	2.32	2.14
	N	24	29	29	82

Note *- Respondents were asked to rate the level of change in their respective university at different levels on a five point scale that runs from no change at all (1) to radical change (5). The figures in columns 3-5 are average scores per university and the 6th column shows combined average value for all the three universities. Average score of < 2.5 is interpreted as insignificant change and > 3.5 as indicator significant change. A score between 2.5 and 3.5 is interpreted as moderate.*

The challenges of continuity of old ways is what has been evidenced empirically in the HE sector over the years (see Musselin 2005, Bleiklie and Henkel 2005). The experience of adopting new academic governance and management techniques from business, as

studies reveal, proved not to be as effective as claimed when conditioned by the institutional atmosphere and tradition of HEIs (Birnbuam 2001). As Massen and Van Vught (2002) remarked, trying to transfer business instruments, techniques and systems to higher education altogether is inherently precarious. This is so because academic cultures, values and beliefs in universities for most part evolve to protect the legitimate interest of researchers and teachers. Any move including those generated from within the university itself could fail if they are meant to compromise this (Clark 1983).

In this regard, the basic purpose at which the BPR reform in Ethiopia targeted is to bring about effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness in service delivery of public institutions, which require capitalizing on the economic dimensions of institutions, whereas the academic values and traditions are deeply ingrained in the social dimension of institutions. This incompatibility along with the sector's old problems may provide interesting explanation of why the institutionalization of newly introduced values is constrained. Besides, lack of trust in between the academic community and the incumbents can also provide part of the elucidation. As the response of both the academic leaders and staffs groups indicates (majority of the academic staffs indicated this perception in response to the open-ended question provided to them), the reform initiative seemed to have been interpreted by bulk of the academic community as government's continual endeavor to bring the country's HEIs under the functional needs of incumbent politicians. Hence, no matter how profound the changes in the formal arrangement could be, all these and related factors seems to impede the reform's outcome leading to Musselin's (2005) idea of prevalence of continuity of old ways. This eventually lead to hybrid glance of mix in which winds of the change are felt in some aspects, while in other aspects discrepancy between what formally is defined by the structure and how people actually do dominates.

4.3 Reflection on the Organizational Response of the Universities

A search for appropriate organizational blueprint and operational operandi of any entity needs to have a design most suited to its size, scope and areas of operation and specialization. In this regard, the three targeted universities have different perspectives. In terms of scope and size, none of the other two is comparable to the country's giant institution, AAU, which continues to be a pace-setter in the nation's HE sector. It differs

from the two in that it is essentially a collection of many geographically dispersed campuses, has much larger enrollment than the two combined and has peculiar direction of development. Both the two universities, Hawassa and Mekele, are the outgrowth of special institutions, which still maintains their caliber as major actor in shaping their respective university's internal dynamics. Contrary to this, no institute, college or faculty has such legacy in AAU. AAU accommodates a relatively diversified community partly owing to its long years' heritage and partly due to its background as an amalgamation of a number of geographically dispersed colleges. Thus, compared to the other two universities, it is more of a federalized university – an association of colleges than an institution tightly integrated around particular organizational identity. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect the organizational structure of the universities to reflect these organizational differences.

However, this is not reflected much in the universities organizational response. Even though the orientation of the BPR initiative pave the way for ambivalent trend, the institutions reaction to the reform is found to fall more or less within a single response strategy, acquiescence among others, as all the three universities in the end showed apparent move towards strong executive leadership ideal. As has been uncovered in the analysis made so far, a more analogous trend has been witnessed among the universities though AAU is found to stand out marginally from the other two. Indeed, the preliminary arrangement proposed by the universities before the revision of the legal framework marked relative difference. As it had a blend of reactions ranging from unconscious and conscious obedience to partial conformity with the values and requirements of the reform, it would have made the universities response accommodate actions ranging from simple acquiescence to compromise. Nevertheless, much of the divergence trend evidenced in the initial organizational arrangement of the universities has been concealed by the provisions of the recently revised legislation. Even in this circumscribed response boundary, AAU is found to respond in a slightly different manner as it tries to balance the new trend, i.e. managerial ideal with the collegial structures down in its structure.

This comes as no surprise as the Ethiopian context inherently does not provide institutions with the ground to pursue their own action in real terms as is normally the case in developing countries where governments are capable enough to use a wide range of control instruments ranging from coercive to normative ones. In this regard, the analytical

framework drawn provides insightful tool to explicate the underlying conditions leading to the similarity in the universities response. So as to relate how the government enacted its influences through meandering instruments, let me refer to Scott's (1998) category of organizational environment- technical and institutional. As delineated in the analytical framework, the government in the context of Ethiopian HE is the prime actor in technical/task environment as it is the main source of economic resource for universities and the main end user of their output. In relation to the BPR initiative, though donors and lenders like IMF and World Bank are participated, the money is channeled to the respective institutions through government and hence, the means is still under the discretion of the latter as is always the case. Likewise, in the institutional environment it has strong instruments through which it influences the behavior of its subjects such as rules, laws and regulatory mechanisms and governmental agencies and quasi-public institutions whose independency is manipulated to serve governmental interests. In specific reference to BPR in the universities, providing training and conference sessions for BPR teams of the universities falls under these for instance. In a similar way, its attempt to shape the overall organizational structure of the universities through the new proclamation falls under the sphere of institutional environment. In general terms, as evidenced by its deeds, the government managed to influence the response of universities in circuitous manner.

However, this does not mean that the government exerted mechanical pressure on all universities at same level, neither were its influences linear. Being an independent actor, the universities proved to respond in a slightly different way according to their background. A good case in point is the difference found in between AAU on one side and MU and HU on the other. Though the institution level arrangement across the universities is considerably similar due to the provisions of the law, the downward hierarchy of AAU puts diversified set of decision-making arrangements which involve both selective regeneration of existing structure and creative adaptation of new bodies whereas in Hawassa University and Mekele University, regeneration and renovating existing structures has been the trend. In line with this, the medium and lower level arrangements of AAU are found to be slightly different from the other two as AAU's structure tend to be more open, collegial and accessible to staffs compared to MU's and HU's hierarchical and selective structures. Thus, specifying the universities response as a solitary

consequence of government's deliberative action is too sensitive though its role is incontestable.

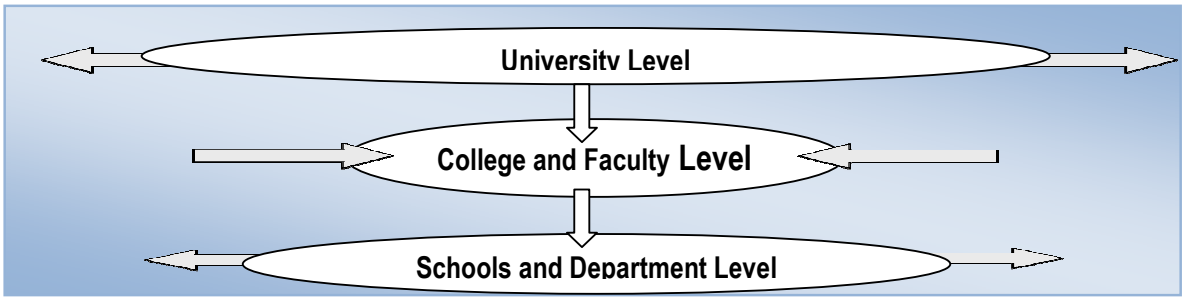
In this regard, assessment of the adaptation process the universities passed through in view of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) bridging process, isomorphism mechanisms, i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative, provides insightful elucidation as to how governmental influence forms only one of the underlying causes though it is the most decisive one. As it is evidenced in the application of rigid criteria such as the revision of legal framework and the wide range of training and consultation sessions, coercive pressure can be considered as the prominent one of the three forces of isomorphism. The analysis in the previous sections revealed how these hampered heterogeneous responses. The presence of this can also be explained from Hannan and Freeman's (1989) population ecology perspective. As uncovered elsewhere, convergence trend emerged as the universities sought to get government's legitimacy by adapting their organizational system to the revised framework. Parallel with this, of the remaining two isomorphisis forces, the role of mimetic isomorphism in shaping the response of the universities can be evidenced in a more prominent way. It is evidenced by the universities benchmarking and experience sharing culture. Indeed, the hegemony of mimetic forces as decisive bridging force is engineered by the government through its policy of peer-to-peer experience sharing. All in all, the government is not the sole actor in maneuvering the similarity and perhaps, the homogeneous trend might have emanated from the anticipation of individual universities to governmental expectation. In anyway, from the above discussions, the soaring role of the government in promoting convergent trend is markedly evident, be it through coercive or mimetic mechanisms or in the form of individual institution's competition for government's legitimacy.

4.4 Reflection on the Universities Institutional Governance – where is it projected to?

The universities responded more or less in line with the ideals of BPR - creating decentralized structure that capacitate operating level units to have full control of their processes from start to end. The new arrangement involves both selective regeneration of what exists and creative adaptation of new elements. With this, the form, composition and

function of academic decision making bodies, leadership positions and the role of all other constituents across the universities is more or less transformed in a way that embed strong executive leadership in place of representative leadership ideals. Vertically, the basic academic units all the way to university leadership are structured in a way that enables devolution of power from higher to lower levels. With the power devolution endeavor, the role and function of bodies in the medium hierarchy i.e. College has been undermined as itsr traditional authority is pushed down to the operating level units. Eventually, colleges now serve as a forum for coordination of administrative and miscellaneous services to academic units. They normally don't have role in the day-to-day academic and administrative decision-making of academic units. Alongside the hierarchical delineations, the horizontal differentiations at each level give way to the collegial academic councils such as Senate, College Council and School Council. However, the power of these bodies is reduced compared to what they used to have in the previous system. With these, a well-articulated hierarchical chain of command that cascades power from the higher echelon to the lower level operating units has been set. In general, what appears to emerge as delineated by the new arrangement is a blend of ambivalent predicament in which managerially domineering approach is coupled with collegial dealings in such a way that the managerialist approach prevail especially in MU and HU.

Figure 13 - Changing power in Ethiopian HEIs hierarchal levels after BPR initiative



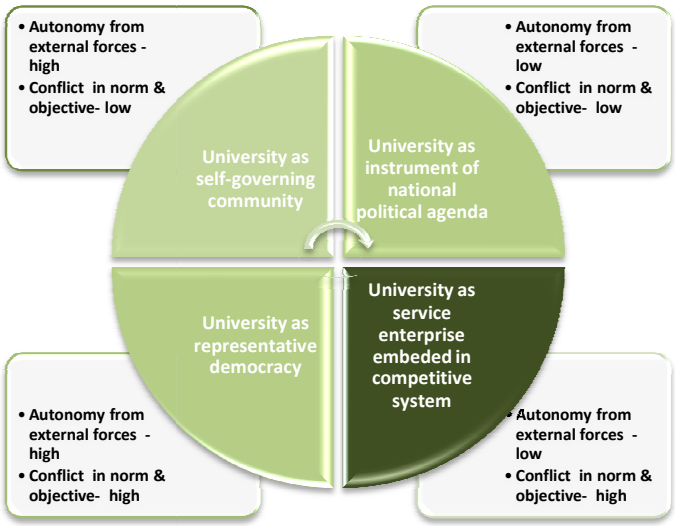
Coupling this inclination with the waves of governmentally initiated reform endeavors prior to BPR over the past two decades gives perceptive depiction of where the Ethiopian HEIs organizational functioning is formally meant to head. However, before reflecting on the contemporary reform rhetoric in the country's HE, let me pay brief visit to the sector's prevalent characteristics preceding the reform rhetoric in order to show the direction of the formal deliberations more clearly. In this regard, from the very beginning the

government has been playing mono-centric role in formulating policies, rules and decisions that determine universities day to day affairs and character. The universities were fully funded from public resources with no private contribution at all and hence, were micro-managed the government from the center. Government used to routinely appoint university officials and academic staffs. All non-academic staffs were civil servants managed by the national civil service commission rather than by university executives. Line item budgets prevailed and institutional allocations were increased incrementally from one year to the next with little or no relation to enrollments or educational outcomes. Besides, additional income generated by institutions used to be deducted from their government subventions creating a strong disincentive for income diversification (Gemeda 2008, Saint 2004, Yimam 2008).).

When it comes to the contemporary reform rhetoric, the issuance of the 2003 Higher Education Proclamation (HEP) marks a turning point. The proclamation manifested a clear deliberation to move away from existing arrangement. A good instance in view of this is the redistribution of the state's power in different direction- downward as HEIs are granted greater autonomy and outward as traditional tasks of the state moved to the quasi-public agencies. Downward, it gave the universities substantial autonomy so that they can be free standing institution whose administration is carried out in the name of an independent board. This increased autonomy is meant to enhance the universities' capacity to face financial stringencies and new demands while strengthening organizational innovations. Outward, the traditional role of the state was squeezed to circuitous one as quasi independent public agencies came to the arena. A good instance in point of this is the establishment of the two major independent board steered agencies: Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC) & Higher Education Relevance & Quality Agency (HERQA) (now this agency is referred to as Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA)) to whom government's traditional responsibility of devising national HE strategies, quality control & accreditation are entrusted (HEP 2003). With respect to funding, the reform agenda focuses importantly on diversifying financial resources and improving efficiency as the financial burden of massification on the government is increasingly becoming unbearable. It envisages the introduction of cost-sharing by beneficiary students, the encouragement of income generation, improved financial autonomy, as well as improvements in efficiency (see Yizengaw 2003, Saint 2004, Yizengaw 2007). Though its implementation was delayed till recent years, the 2003

proclamation also stipulated the move from the strict line-item budgeting to block-grant system (Yizengaw 2007). All these endeavors have been reinforced by the recently revised 2009 proclamation which granted universities' incumbents colossal authority in addition to strengthening the provisions of the 2003 statutory (see HEP 2009, Part Three for detail). All these reform rhetoric promote the adoption of private-like behavior by the universities. A good indication of this for instance is the acute increase in the number of students enrolled on fee-paying evening and summer programs, making such students account nearly half of the enrolment in public institutions (Yizengaw 2007). All in all, the reform deliberations indicate the intention to bring about momentous institutional change that involves the deinstitutionalization of the mono-centric governmental role. Interpretation of these underpinnings through Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization points to the deliberation to make the universities as enterprises providing service to society.

Figure 14 - Review of Ethiopian universities' formal arrangement after the BPR initiative as interpreted through Olsen's (2007) visions of university organization and governance



Note *– The depth of colors ranging from deep green to light green indicates the prevalent vision of university with deep green indicating dominant form on the one end of the continuum and light green indicating least one on the other end of the continuum.*

As this shift is synonymous to the trend in the developed world, it goes hand in glove with Altbach's (1998) interpretation of the center-periphery concept, in which developing countries HEIs are perceived as peripheral that look to HE systems in the industrialized

world for direction. Indeed, as has been the case for the developed world, HE in Ethiopia is in unprecedented crisis owing to more or less similar forces of intense massification and the subsequent austerity in funding. Nevertheless, even if this drivers are central for the future pattern of the country's HE sector as they did for the developed countries, this does not mean that the breakdown of how developed nations tackled the crisis of massification and the subsequent austerity in funding can successfully be applied in Ethiopia though important lessons could be learnt. Rather, as marked by the discussion on the status quo preceding the BPR reform, interpreting the dynamics of Ethiopian HEIs as a function of formal frameworks can be deceptive. Therefore, against the deliberations of the formal framework, a careful analysis of contextual settings and practical realities is needed to ascertain how far the ideals embodied in the contemporary reform rhetoric are manifested pragmatically.

The foremost issue in this regard is the driving force behind such reforms. As opposed to the developed world's HE reform which fundamentally emanated from the evolution of their socio-cultural, economic and political environments; the drive towards such organizational ideals in the developing world does not occur as an organic process but a product of imposition by supra-national forces such as World Bank and IMF (see Peters 2001, Maassen 2003, Scott 1995, Vaira 2004). Acting as institutional carrier, these institutions bind their financial loans and support to the conformity of these countries' institutional and organizational structures to the globally rationalized neoliberal ideals of market algorithm, minimalist state and corporate discourses of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness (Vaira 2004). In this regard, as a case in African countries in general, the influence of these institutions began to emerge in Ethiopia within changing political context since the late 1990's more profoundly (see Common and Mengesha 2007). BPR initiative in Ethiopia is not exception to this sphere of influence as evidenced by the participation of these institutions in initiating the BPR reform.

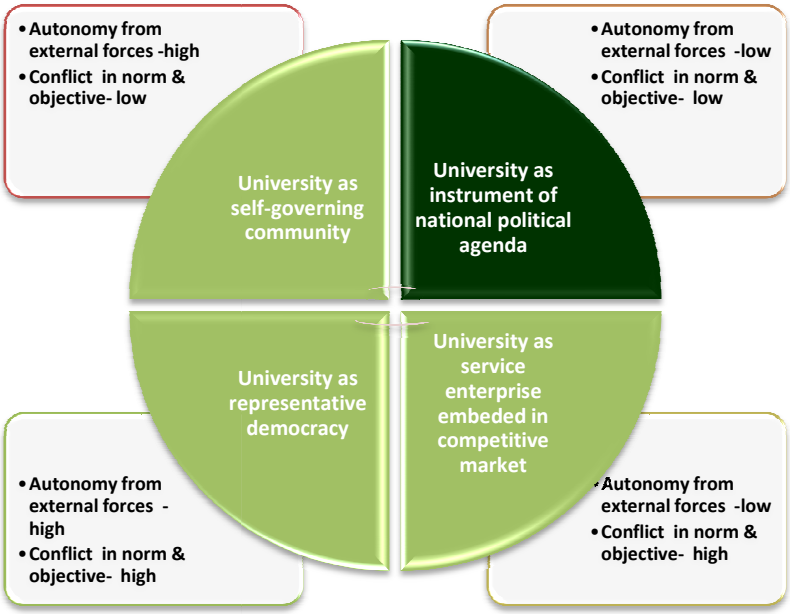
The reflection of such neoliberal driven reforms in HE is all about reducing state's control in favor of market-like mechanism. This requires decentralization of power that has traditionally been the domain of central governments in developing world. Thus, the success of such reforms requires political and ideological drift from the conventionally held authoritarian culture to decentralization, strengthening of democracy and good governance for which case the Ethiopian government proved to lag so much behind over

the years (see The Report on the Practice of Human Right by US State Department and other international agencies over the past two decades for instance). Contrary to this, Pitcher (2004) relates the success of such reforms to government's commitment. This problem of mismatch between what the reform requires and the government's authoritarian culture transplants a potential discrepancy in the success of the endeavor. A good historical case from African experience is the instance in which a well-established supervisory model, let alone such creeping trial to instill new one, was abolished when found being incompatible with authoritarian culture in those African countries where the British model was initially implanted (see Neave and van Vught 1994). In a similar leaning, in Ethiopia too, this backdrop of power centralization has left long shadows of embedded impulse in the government's deeds where strict and sometimes arbitrary interference over various aspects of the individual HEIs is still evident. For instance, the mandate of staff recruitment, which is exclusively given to institutions by the statutory, is still under the control of the Ministry of Education. A good case in point is recruitment of junior academic staffs and expatriates for all institutions by Ministry of Education. In a similar experience, though statutorily the institutions are granted considerable degree of autonomy in the use of their resources, strong government intervention has been evidenced. The same is true regarding the autonomy of institutions in academic matters such as curriculum issue; student enrollment and placement (see (Assefa 2008, Gemeda 2008, Mehari 2010, Semela 2008). All these do not defy government's critics for undermining the institutions' autonomy. Rather the persistent governmental interventions divulge that universities autonomy in Ethiopia comes from the idea that government is overloaded and hence, technical decisions can be left to individual institutions. Thus, whenever deemed necessary, the government is seen as having the legitimacy to intervene.

This normally holds among developing countries, where internalization of university as instrument dedicated to modernization and economic progress is the conception (Van Vught 1993). In Ethiopia, it is evidenced not only in the government's practice but also in its policy documents. For instance, in the country's Education Sector Development Program I-III, HEIs are clearly designated as instruments for national purposes (see ETPTGE 1994, FDRE 2002a, FDRE 2002b, FDRE 2003, FDRE 2006). They are expected to actively participate in the social transformation, modernization and training of the country's human resource as per the government's rational plan indisputably. Universities are thus conceived as cadre of instruments that can be used to mobilize intellectual and

technical resources to achieve national goals. This would eventually lead to Neave & Van Vught's (1991) idea of inventionary state that attempts to influence the whole system's dynamics and internal institutional affairs as opposed to neo-liberalists' facilitator state that conceive HEIs as autonomous service enterprises embedded in competitive system. Given all these, it is unrealistic to expect Ethiopian universities to become as autonomous as the formal framework designate.

Figure 15 - Practical account of governance in Ethiopian universities after the BPR initiative as delineated by Oslen's (2007) visions of university organization



Note *– The depth of colors ranging from deep green to light green indicates the prevalent vision of university with deep green indicating dominant form on the one end of the continuum and light green indicating least one on the other end of the continuum.*

Apart from this, even if the government commits itself to the ideals of such reforms, there are limitations imposed by structural and institutional incompatibility. So as to reveal these, let me refer to Burton Clark's (1983) famous 'triangle of coordination' which depicts state authority, market and academic oligarchy as forces that determine the way HE system is coordinated. The contemporary shift in HE from state control to supervisory steering in this triangle is revealed in the tendency of the state to step-back and allow decision-making by individual students, institutions and independent agencies in a market-like mechanism. The new role of the state is to watch the rules of the game played

by relatively autonomous players and change the rules as market engineer to level the pitch when the game is no longer able to lead to satisfactory results (see also De Boer and File 2009, Massen 2003, Santiago 2008). To move to such mechanism, not only the pitch and players in the sector need to be sufficiently capacitated but also the evolution of the market-mechanism should reach to a level strong enough to coordinate the system such as by stimulating demand for manpower, techniques and research generated products to which HEIs may in turn respond and thereby, generate revenue that may substitute state funding (Neave and Van Vught 1994). Nonetheless, at its present stage of development, the market mechanism in African countries in general is not deeply ingrained to avoid failure let alone in such quasi-public sectors, even in private sectors. In such circumstances, where the market mechanism isn't dependable and where state is a major actor as interpreter and funder of societal demand, it is perhaps not surprising to see state's role reinforcing behind the scene if not by a dint of formal decree.

By the same logic, for such mechanism to work effectively, buffer organizations and interest groups should be able to actively take independent part so that the system's balance will be kept. Any buffer body could keep its legitimacy only if it can sustain as neutral body standing between government and HEIs (Van Vught 1993). In this regard, the statutory in Ethiopia as mentioned elsewhere gave rise to the two independent board-steered public institutions to whom devising the sector's strategy and quality assurance is entrusted. Nonetheless, Van Vught (1993) stressed that in several countries such organizations appear either to be transformed to serve more directly government's interests or to be removed. The experience in Ethiopia is not far from supporting this as the government often times tries to use such institutions as a sort of channel for social control or intimidate their independent exercise for political reasons (see Assefa 2008, Gemeda 2008 and Rahmato 2002).

All these backdrops casts doubt on how far such externally initiated neo-liberal driven reforms could go in bringing about the desired change in Ethiopian HE sector. Indeed, the problem doesn't lie with taking best practices from outside but with the way it is coupled with local contexts. Thus, such moves need to capture locally unique circumstances and realities that influence the development and integration of the HE system in the concerned countries. It requires not only commitment among governments but also structural and institutional adjustment in capacitating independent institutions and mentoring dependable

market mechanism. This comes through evolutionary leaping-frog adaptation process in a system that nurtures social and economic institutions to grow in an independent way. Till then, such winds of change blowing to developing countries will go on having hybrid manifestation in that in surface glance the system appears to have been gearing in line with global trends when in fact it is vicious circle back to mono-centric governmental role sarcastically.

5 Conclusionary Remark

The implementation of BPR in Ethiopian universities offers an interesting glimpse on how organizations respond to external pressures in the strongly regulated developing world context. The conceptual framework provided insightful analytical tools not only to explain how the individual institutions dealt with the reform initiative but also the role played by the government. Though the government is formally designated to have a limited role, the analysis of the target universities response evidenced how decisive its role is in shaping the universities' response. The mechanisms it employed are, however, different from what it has traditionally been using over the years. As opposed to its customary direct intervention actions, it used more sophisticated instruments ranging from regulative mechanisms such as revisiting the legal framework to less officious mechanisms such as providing trainings and conferences. In addition to this, it also played an important role in paving the way for mimetic mechanisms by promoting experience sharing among the institutions. This strong governmental manipulation eventually limited the repertoire of individual universities response to passive conformity in the form of simple acquiesce and compromise, leading to the concealment of institutional dissimilarities. Consequently, a more homogeneous inclination has been evidenced across the targeted universities ultimate arrangements.

In line with this, the arrangements of all the three universities marked a clear departure from the collective and representative leadership to a more domineering executive leadership ideal. To this end, the structures in each university became less inclusive and more hierarchical in relative terms. Complimentary to this, decision-making organs from university level all the way down to the operating level academic units are established in a way that enable devolution of power to the lower levels. This eventually resulted in the concentration of power at the apex and bottom of the universities' structure squeezing the college level's role to the periphery. In a related move, the pattern of power distribution at each level is also found to tilt in favor of academic leaders at the expense of collegial academic councils though these bodies are still delineated to have important role.

Within this homogeneous frame, however, the response of the universities is found to reflect the institutions' background in terms of size, complexity and maturity. In this regard, of the three universities targeted, AAU's downward hierarchical lineup is found to

have a slightly different and diversified arrangement in which attempt to couple the new managerialist orientation with the then collective leadership ideals in a more balanced way is made. Even though the vertical hierarchies of regulatory and executive power give way to laterally collegial structures in HU and MU as well, these two universities' structures in general and the lower levels in particular have been found to be more selective and hierarchical when compared to AAU's as the structures in these universities are not inclusive and accessible to all academic staffs.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the level of change in real terms, a very fluid scenario has been uncovered. Though providing comprehensive assessment in this regard is beyond the scope and purpose of this study, the assessment of empirical functioning of the newly instilled provisions highlights how patchy the experience of BPR initiative in Ethiopian universities is in practical terms. Though successful in changing the formal organization of the universities, the governmental inducement and coercion has not up to now proved to be capable of generating the required change in the day-to-day dynamics of the institutions. As evidenced by the perception of sampled academic leaders and staffs of the target universities, the status quo is far from changing as the universities' internal dynamics is still heavily conditioned by past rule of thumbs except in a handful aspects where the winds of the change is felt. Apart from this, the universities day to day organizational operandi is found to be entangling with the predicaments of the preceding system such as lack of productive administrative system to coordinate activities across the university, apparent trend to practically centralize administrative and academic decisions and interference of top officers in routines of lower units. This coupled with the pragmatic underpinnings emanating from the government's lack of commitment to the ideals of power devolution pose serious doubt on whether the emerging pattern in the institutions day-to-day dynamics would be in line with the formal deliberation of the reform endeavors.

Whether the status quo keeps on this way is what remains to be seen in time. The literature in HE, however, indicates how successful established traditions are in their adapting mechanism to have gotten past environmental pressures (see Clark 1983:183, Musselin 2005 for instance). Clark (1983) points to the organizational fragmentation aspect as miraculous blessing that incline HEIs adaptive capacity to bend and adapt in incremental way without dismantling their culture radically. Thus, no matter how well

intended as it may exceptionally be, undertaken reforms in the bottom heavy HE structure do not automatically imply their way as far down to the lower hierarchy as desired. Musselin (2005) underlined that it is the continuity of the old culture that prevails in real terms in the short run especially at the real operating level units. In view of these, the BPR initiative in Ethiopian universities appears to have been caught in the ambush of these setbacks as the universities' day-to-day dynamics reveals a hybrid glance of past and current trends. However, the essence of the reform endeavor cannot be measured by its façade view but by the subsequent improvements or retrogression it brought practically. It is therefore interesting to examine more not only the institutionalization process of the newly introduced ideals but also how the introduction of these ideals affected the basic functions of the institutions – teaching-learning, research and community service.

In general terms, in a system where the upper bodies are censured for undermining the autonomy of the lower units while the lower units in their part are also criticized for failing to take advantage of the new situation, a very confusing scenario where some elements are still conditioned by the past patterns is expectable. Change in a HE system where the state is omnipotent is not primarily the product of a process that involves adaptation and attempts to change the deliberations of the reform by the individual HEIs. Among other factors, it will be mainly the product of requirements and commitments coming from the state itself. Therefore, the Ethiopian HEIs' internal dynamics become more evident and clear in the long run depending on the long-term commitment of stakeholders involved in general, the leadership of government incumbents and the respective institutions in particular to the ideals embodied in the reforms.

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End Note

All original documents and interviews that have been in Amharic have been translated in to English by the researcher

Appendixes

Appendix A – Additional Tables to Data Analysis

1. Opinion of academic staffs with respect to responsiveness, participatory and flexibility of institutional level governance in their university's new system in comparison to the previous system.

Participatory * Name of Institution

Crosstab

Count

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Participatory	Dissatisfied	10	15	17	42
	Neutral	7	13	9	29
	Satisfied	7	1	3	11
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.678[a]	4	.070
Likelihood Ratio	8.466	4	.076
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.22.

Responsiveness * Name of Institution

Crosstab

Count

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Responsiveness	Dissatisfied	15	18	16	49
	Neutral	4	9	10	23
	Satisfied	5	2	3	10
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.004[a]	4	.405
Likelihood Ratio	4.035	4	.401
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.93.

Flexibility * Name of Institution

Crosstab

Count

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Flexibility	Disatisfied	12	21	18	51
	Nuetral	11	7	9	27
	Satisfied	1	1	2	4
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.376[a]	4	.497
Likelihood Ratio	3.317	4	.506
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.17.

2. Cross tabulation for opinion of academic staffs regarding the governance practice of their respective university at institution level

Collegial * Name of Institution

Crosstab

Count

		Name of Institution			Total
		AAU	HU	MU	
Collegial	Least practiced	2	2	5	9
	Less frequently practiced	11	12	11	34
	Moderately practiced	6	14	12	32
	Frequently practiced	5	1	1	7
Total		24	29	29	82

Bureaucratic * Name of Institution

Crosstab

Count

		Name of Institution			Total
		AAU	HU	MU	
Bureaucratic	Moderately practiced	3	0	10	13
	Frequently practiced	11	16	14	41
	More frequently practiced	10	13	5	28
Total		24	29	29	82

Political * Name of Institution

Crosstab					
Count					
		Name of Institution			Total
		AAU	HU	MU	
Political	Less frequently practiced	1	0	3	4
	Moderately practiced	6	5	13	24
	Frequently practiced	6	12	9	27
	More frequently practiced	11	12	4	27
Total		24	29	29	82

Anarchic * Name of Institution

Crosstab					
Count					
		Name of Institution			Total
		AAU	HU	MU	
Anarchic	Least practiced	1	2	2	5
	Less frequently practiced	7	14	8	29
	Moderately practiced	12	9	12	33
	Frequently practiced	3	4	4	11
	More frequently practiced	1	0	3	4
Total		24	29	29	82

3. Academic staffs' perception towards the level of centralization/decentralization in their respective university academic wing.

Selecting College and School level academic leaders * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Selecting College and School level academic leaders	Centralized	10	15	23	48
	Moderate	6	8	4	18
	Decentralized	8	6	2	16
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.671[a]	4	.046
Likelihood Ratio	10.071	4	.039
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.68.

Selecting new faculty * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Selecting new faculty	Centralized	16	17	19	52
	Moderate	5	9	5	19
	Decentralize	3	3	0	6
Total		24	29	24	77

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.382[a]	4	.357
Likelihood Ratio	6.093	4	.192
N of Valid Cases	77		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.87.

Faculty promotion/tenure decisions * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Faculty promotion/tenure decisions	Centralized	15	16	8	39
	Moderate	6	9	11	26
	Decentralized	3	4	9	16
Total		24	29	28	81

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.727[a]	4	.102
Likelihood Ratio	7.818	4	.098
N of Valid Cases	81		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.74.

Determining use of resources * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Determining use of resources	Centralized	13	17	9	39
	Moderate	9	11	12	32
	Decentralized	2	1	8	11
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.647[a]	4	.047
Likelihood Ratio	9.784	4	.044
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.22.

Approving new academic programs and courses * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Approving new academic programs and courses	Centralized	3	11	9	23
	Moderate	12	13	8	33
	Decentralize	9	5	11	25
Total		24	29	28	81

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.574[a]	4	.108
Likelihood Ratio	8.393	4	.078
N of Valid Cases	81		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.81.

Deciding on routine academic issues * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Deciding on routine academic issues	Centralized	11	13	7	31
	Moderate	5	9	7	21
	Decentralized	7	7	15	29
Total		23	29	29	81

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.212[a]	4	.184
Likelihood Ratio	6.281	4	.179
N of Valid Cases	81		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.96.

4. Academic staffs' perceptions towards structural provisions for staff participation in institutional management and decision making processes in target universities

Lack of faculty involvement is not a problem in the university's current system in comparison to the previous one * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Lack of faculty involvment is not a problem in the university's current system in comparison to the previous one	Disagree	9	13	20	42
	Nuetral	14	11	6	31
	Agree	1	4	3	8
Total		24	28	29	81

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.974[a]	4	.062
Likelihood Ratio	9.204	4	.056
N of Valid Cases	81		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.37.

The academic decision-making process is now more collective and collegial than it was in the previous system * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
The academic decision-making process is now more collective and collegial than it was in the previous system	Disagree	8	17	21	46
	Nuetral	8	5	5	18
	Agree	8	7	3	18
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.888[a]	4	.064
Likelihood Ratio	9.243	4	.055
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.27.

Staffs have stronger voice in decision making process of the current system * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
In comparison to the previous system, staffs have stronger voice in decision making process of the current system	Disagree	11	20	19	50
	Nuetral	11	6	8	25
	Agree	2	3	2	7
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.355[a]	4	.360
Likelihood Ratio	4.295	4	.368
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5.

Staffs have adequate level of representation in governing bodies at each level in the new system than in the previous system * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Staffs have adequate level of representation in governing bodies at each level in the new system than in the previous system	Disagree	13	19	18	50
	Nuetral	10	10	11	31
	Agree	1	0	0	1
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.882[a]	4	.578
Likelihood Ratio	2.927	4	.570
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .29.

The new system has more open and suitable structures for consultation and participation of academic staffs in setting institutional goals, plans and policy decisions * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
The new system has more open and suitable structures for consultation and participation of academic staffs in setting institutional goals, plans and policy decisions	Disagree	12	21	18	51
	Nuetral	11	8	11	30
	Agree	1	0	0	1
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.695[a]	4	.320
Likelihood Ratio	4.771	4	.312
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .29.

5. Staffs' perception regarding leadership practice in their university

The new system capacitates academic leaders to provide competent leadership more effectively and efficiently than the previous system * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
The new system capacitates academic leaders to provide competent leadership more effectively and efficiently than the previous system	Disagree	1	5	9	15
	Nuetral	9	14	14	37
	Agree	14	10	6	30
Total		24	29	29	82

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.787[a]	4	.029
Likelihood Ratio	11.456	4	.022
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.39.

Academic leaders are less autocratic and more collegial in the new system than the previous * Name of Institution

		Name of Institution			Total
		Addis Ababa University	Hawassa University	Mekele University	
Academic leaders are less autocratic and more collegial in the new system than the previous	Disagree	15	20	20	55
	Nuetral	8	7	9	24
	Agree	1	2	0	3
Total		24	29	29	82

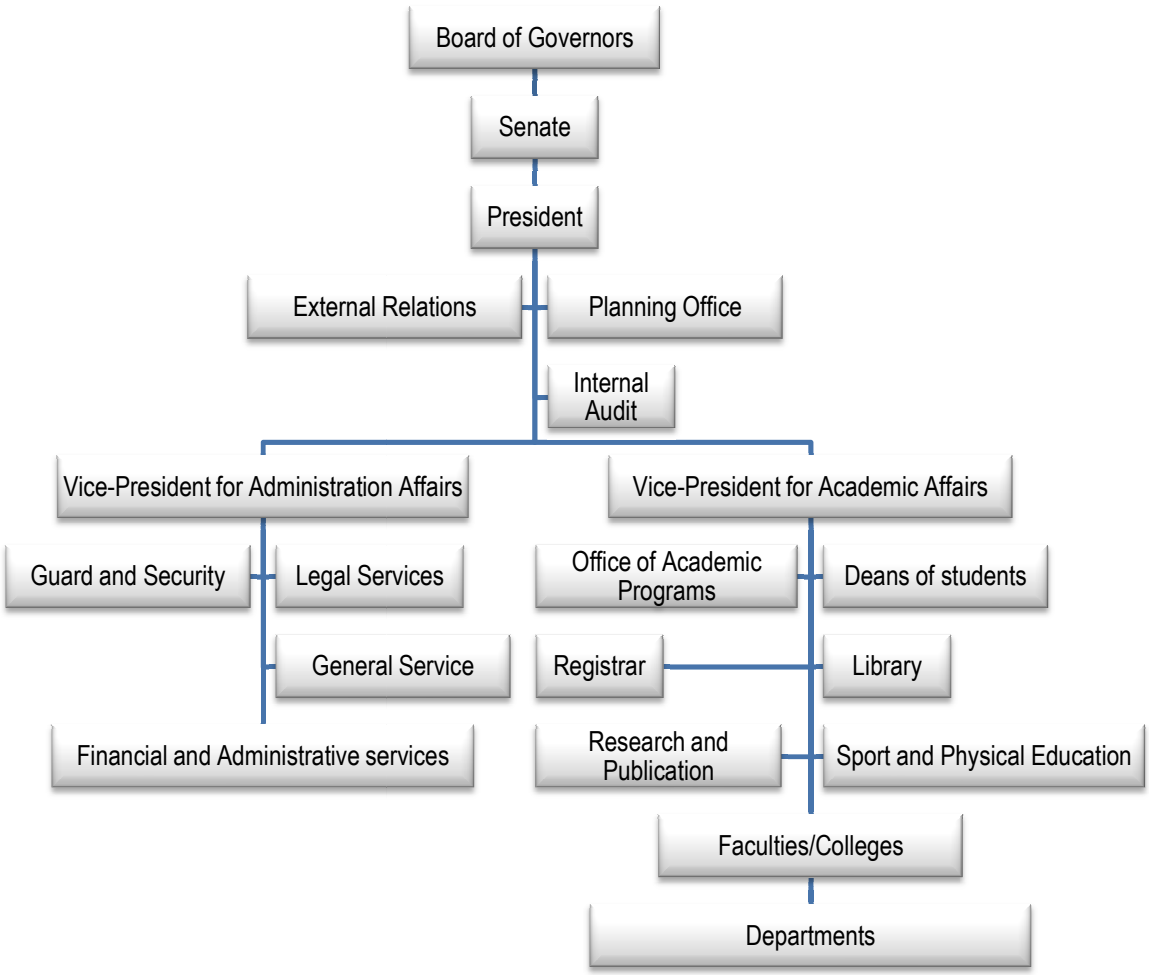
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.442[a]	4	.655
Likelihood Ratio	3.341	4	.503
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .88.

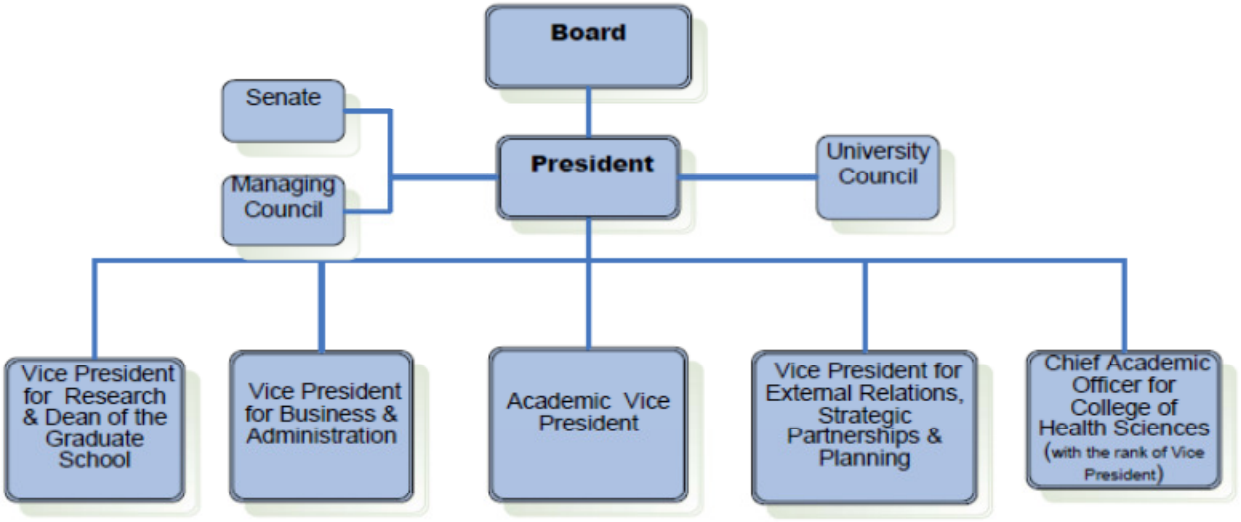
Appendix B – Organizational Structure of target Universities

Appendix B – 1 Organizational Structure of Haile Selassie I University

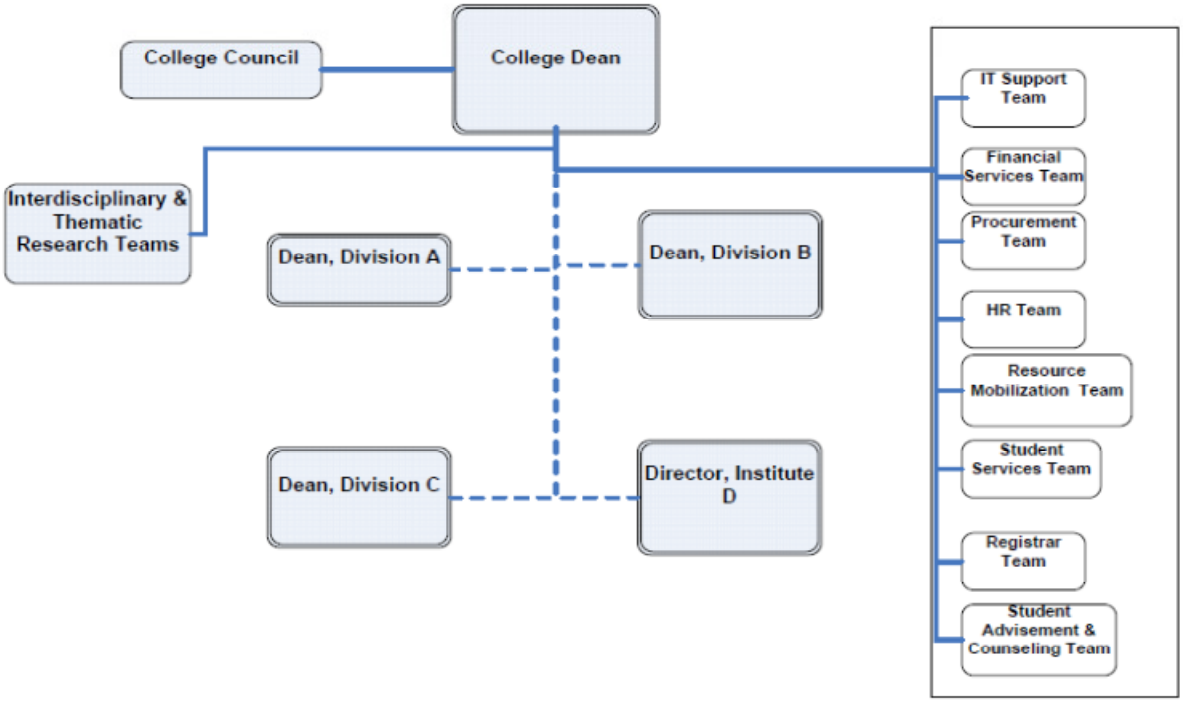


Appendix B – 2 - The New Organizational Structure of AAU

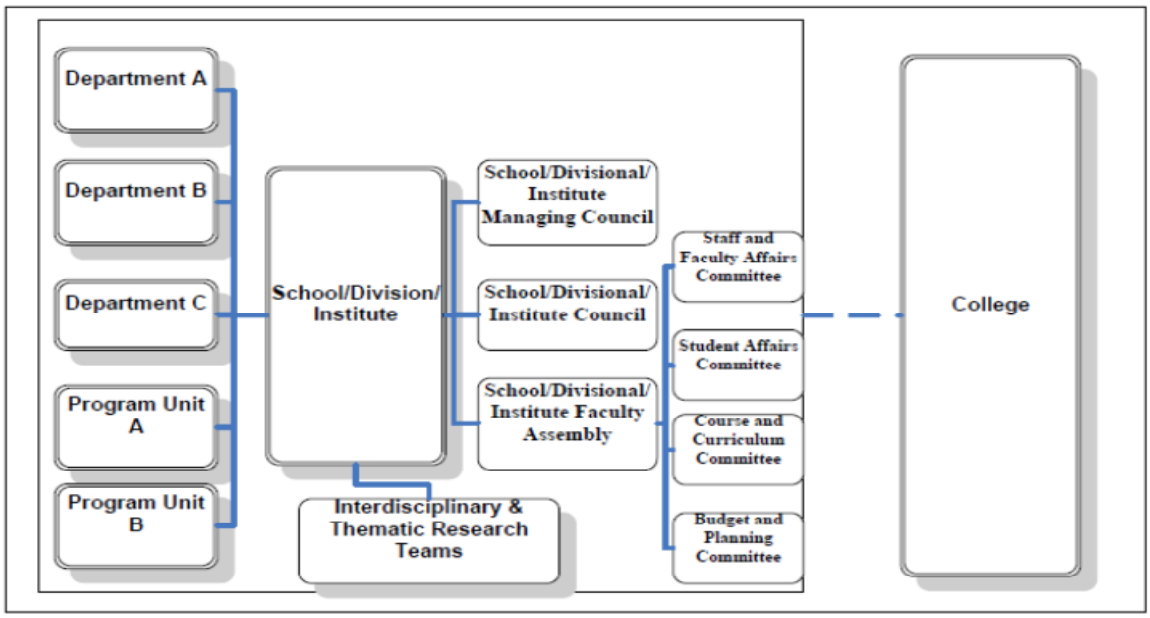
1. Institution level organization structure



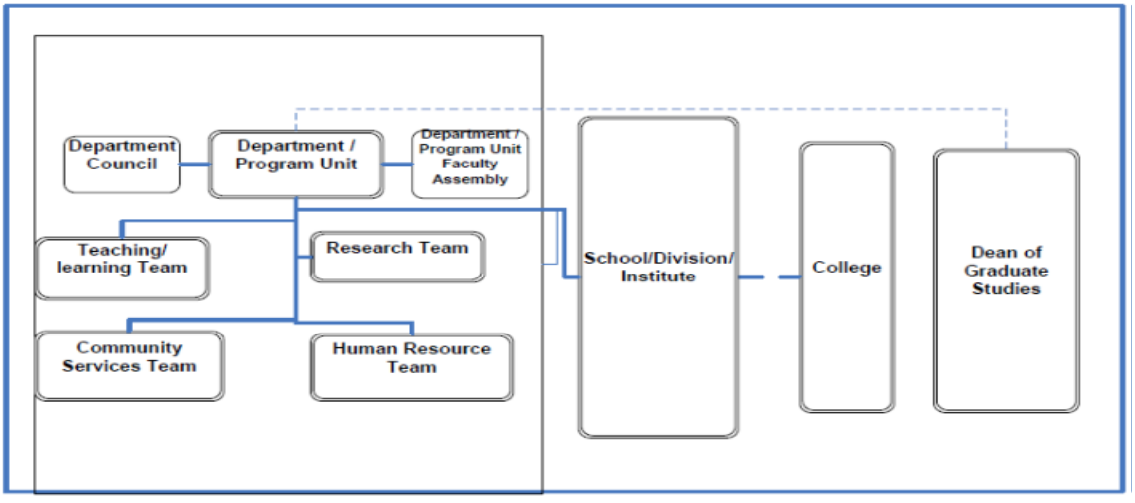
2. Prototype of a College Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement



3. Prototype of a Faculty/School Organization in the new AAU organizational arrangement

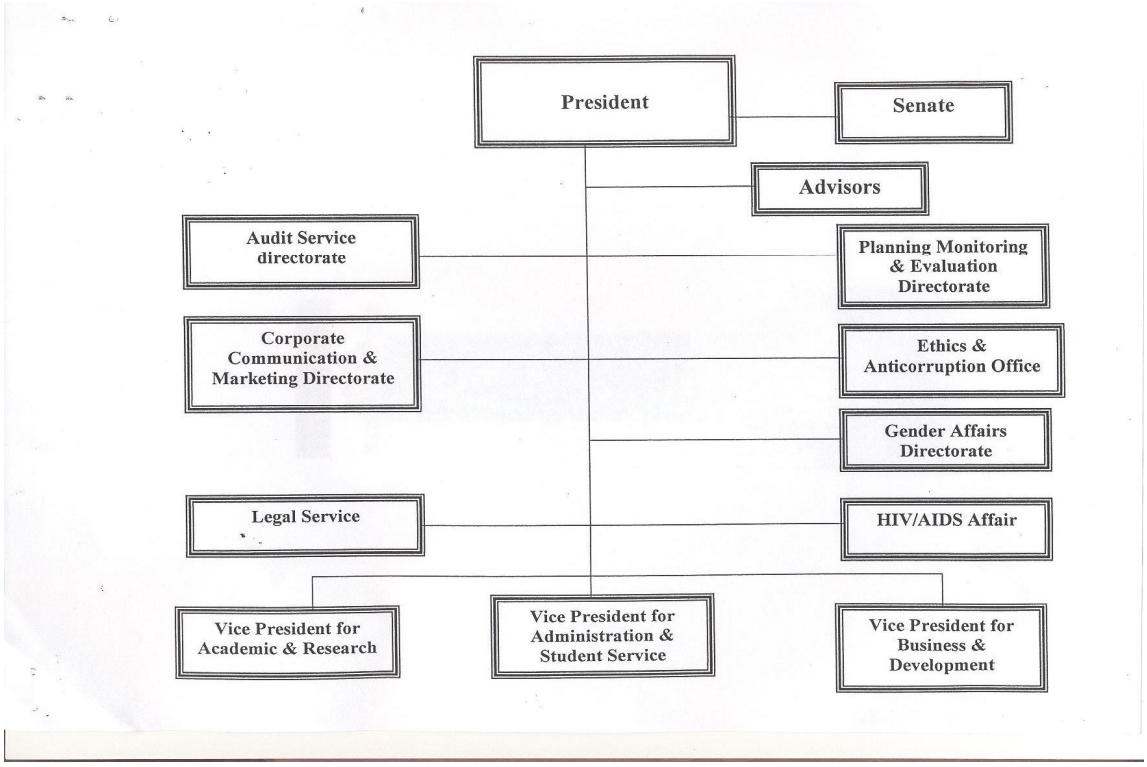


4. Prototype of a Department/Program Unit in the new AAU organizational arrangement

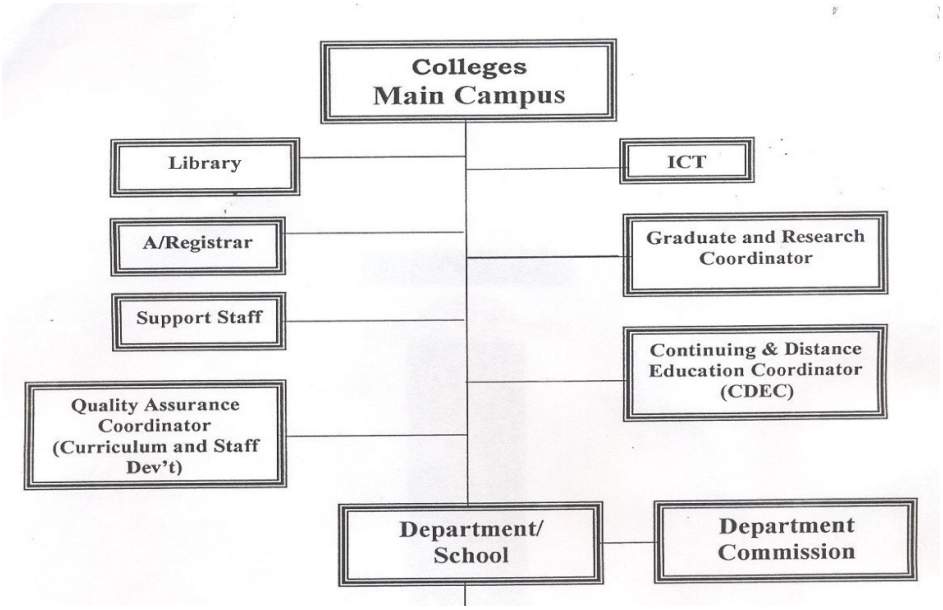


Appendix B – 3 - The New Organizational Structure of Hawassa University (HU)

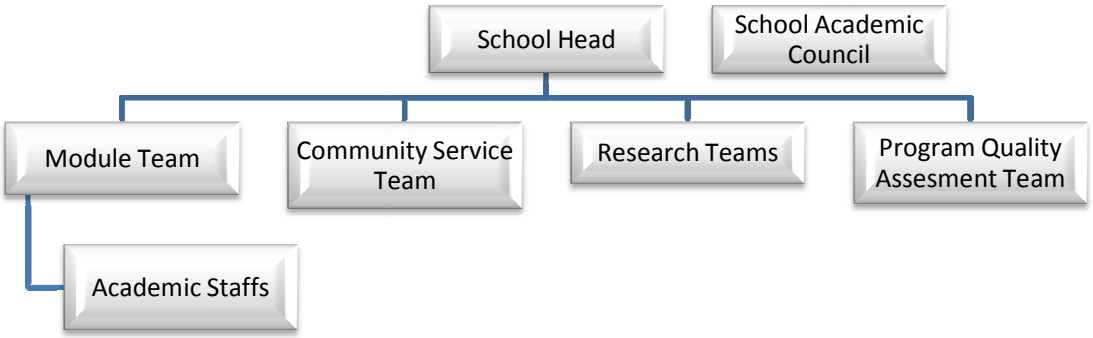
1. Institution level organization structure



2. Prototype of a College and School Organization

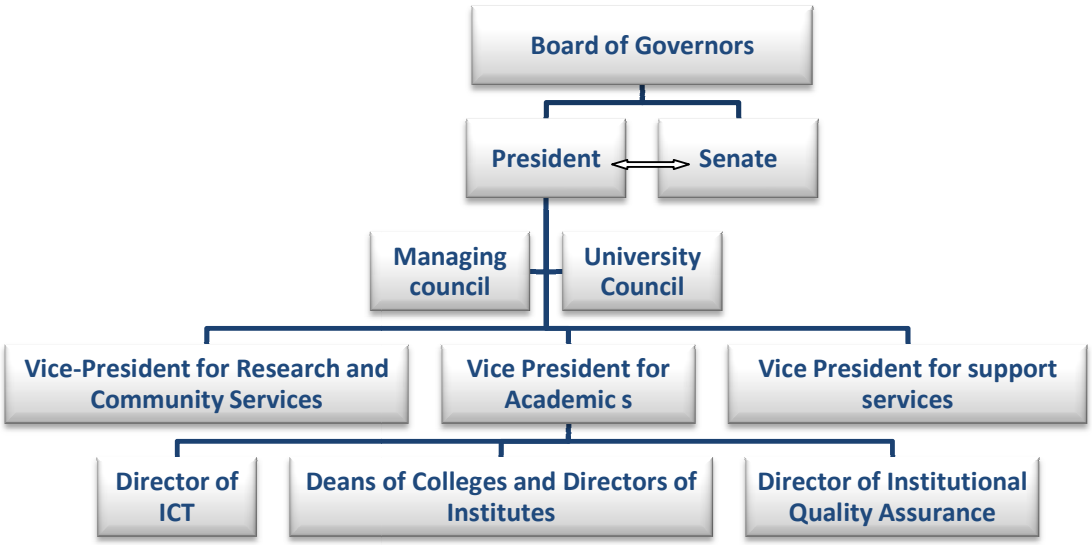


3. Prototype of a School organization

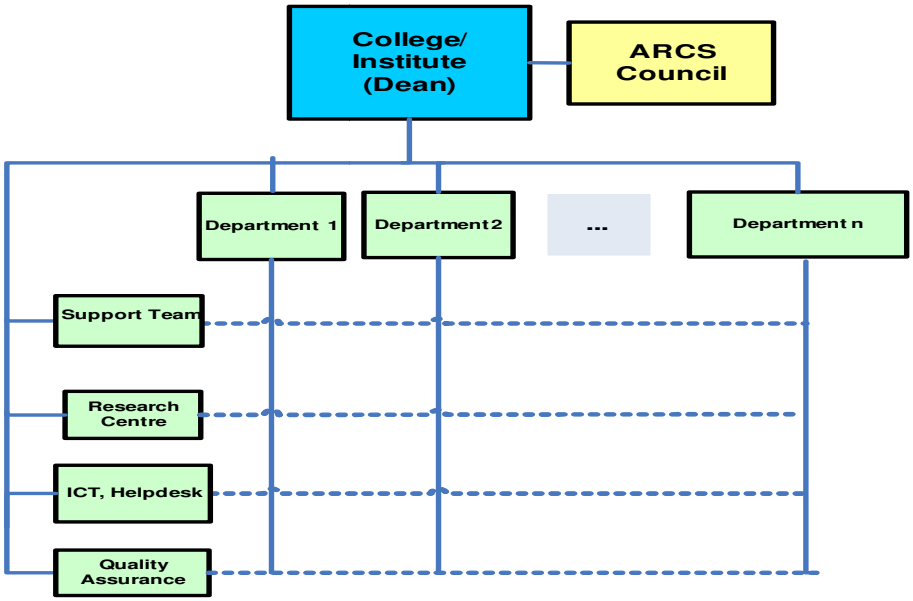


Appendix B – 4 - The New Organizational Structure of Mekele University (MU)

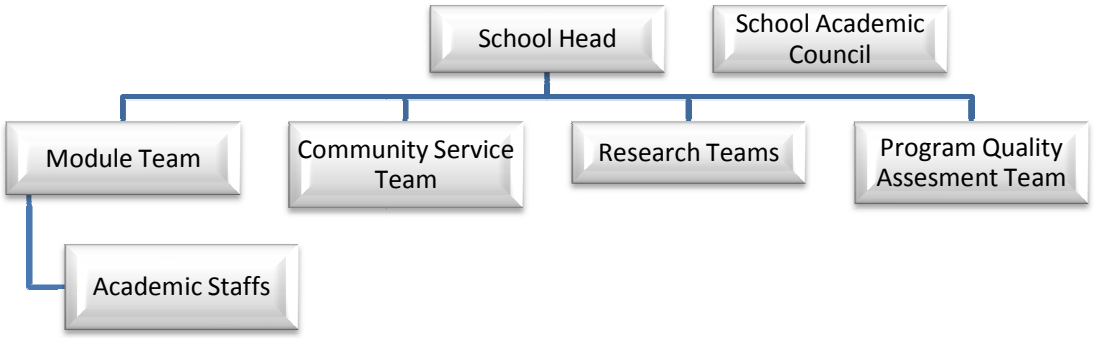
1. Institution level organization structure



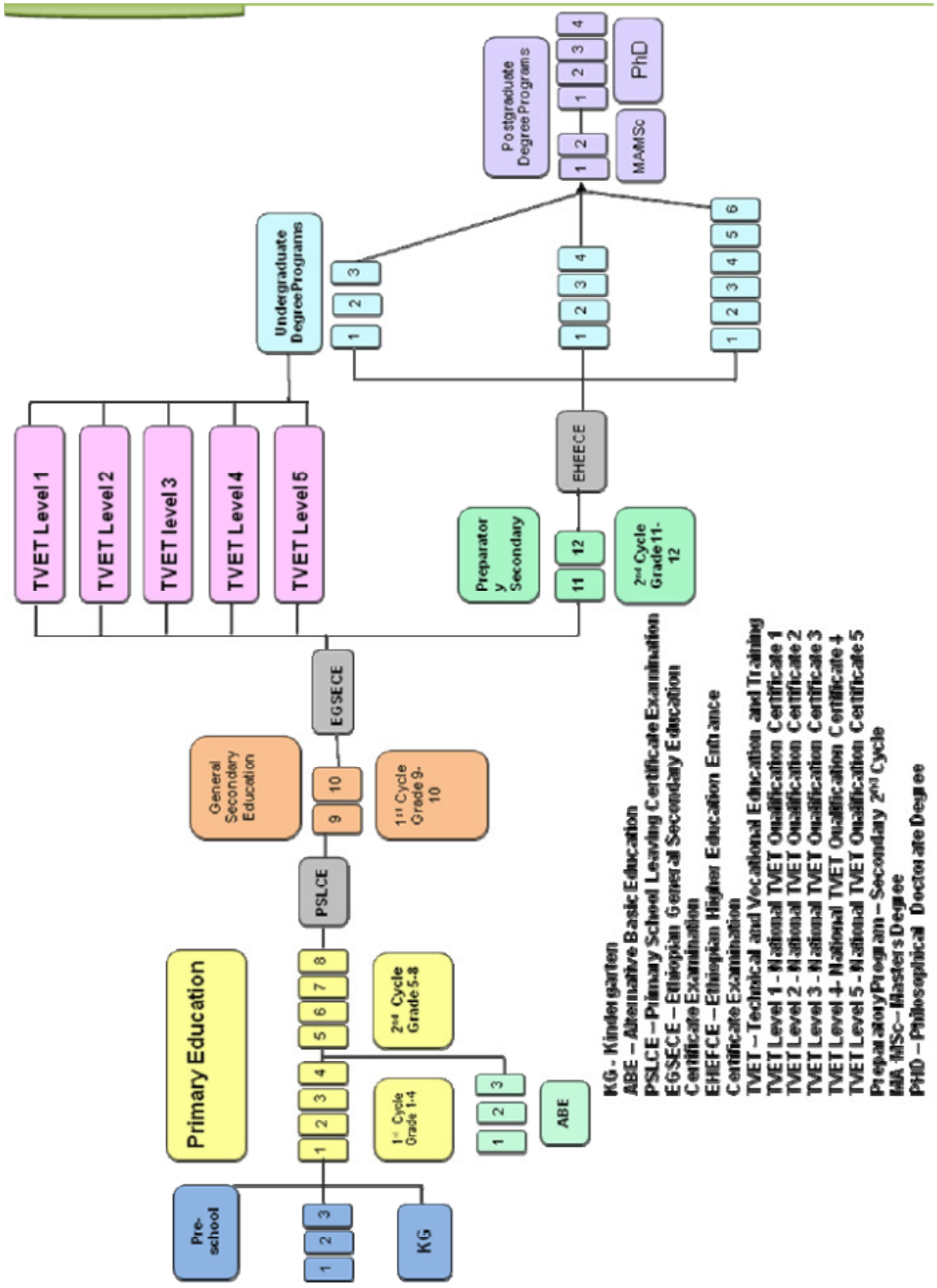
2. Prototype of a College Organization



3. Prototype of School Organization



Appendix C – Structure of Ethiopian Education System



Source - MOE (2011C)

Prior to 1994, the structure was divided into primary (1-6 grade), junior secondary (7-8 grade), senior secondary (9-12 grade) and tertiary education (12+2 years–Diploma, 12+4 years – Bachlores, 12+4+2 years – Masters and 12+4+2+4 – PhD level study) with national examinations given on completion of the first three levels. The new Education and Training Policy restructured this structure as pri-primary, primary (Grade 1-8), lower secondary (Grade 9-10), upper secondary (Grade 11-12), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education programmes in ascending order. According to the new education system, primary education lasts for eight years. It is divided into two cycles: basic education (Grades 1-4) and general education (Grades 5-8). Junior secondary schools no longer exist, as grade 7 and 8 have become the two upper classes of the second cycle of primary education. Secondary education is divided into two cycles: the first general secondary education (Grades 9 and 10), and the second cycle preparatory secondary education (Grades 11 and 12). After completing grade 10, students join either TVET programs or academic stream (preparatory education for university level study) based on their performance on Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE). Those pupils who failed on the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) can opt to attend technical and vocational education (TVET). There are 10+1year, 10+2 years, 10+3years in TVET program. The 1st -year and 2nd -year programmes result in a Level I and Level II Certificate, and 3-year programmes results in Diploma level certificate. Grade 11 and 12 prepares students to continue their studies at the higher education level. It offers a science option and a social science option. At the end of this cycle, students take the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance examination to enter higher education institutions. University level education is offered through regular, evening or distance mode. As defined by the new structure, the first University level study leads to Bachelor's Degree after three years study. In Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering and some other professional fields, the professional qualification is conferred after five and more years of study. The second stage leads to a Master's Degree after a minimum of two years' further study. The Doctor of Philosophy is conferred after three years' study beyond the Master's degree.

Appendix D - Interview Guide and Questionnaire

1. Interview Guideline on BPR reform in Ethiopian Universities

The interview theme is categorized into six focal areas. The first theme is in relation to the antecedents and processes that led to the implementation of the reform in the universities. The remaining five are drafted in such a way that they reflect on the contents of the reform from different aspects of institutional governance.

1. BPR process initiation and its current status in the universities
2. The arrangement for institutions of governance within the universities
3. Organization of academic units and their autonomy in the new arrangement
4. The provisions for staff participation in institutional management and academic decision-making process
5. The patterns of power distribution across a university hierarchy
6. The similarity/difference of organizational arrangement across institutions

2. **Questionnaire on BPR reform in Ethiopian Universities**

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Questionnaire on BPR reform in Ethiopian Universities

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Behailu Aschalew, student at the Masters Program in Higher Education, offered jointly by the University of Oslo-Norway, University of Tampere-Finland and University of Aveiro-Portugal. Currently, I am working on my thesis titled *'The Path of Governance Transformation in Ethiopian Higher Education - Institutional Perspective, With Specific Reference to Business Process Reengineering (BPR) Reform'* The purpose of the study is to assess how universities in Ethiopia restructured their governance and management system in response to the recent BPR reform. To this end, this questionnaire is set up to gather data regarding your perception on the empirical functioning of the new structure. The data from the questionnaire will be kept confidential and be destroyed after the study is completed. No personal identifiers will be included in reporting the results. Please the reliability and validity of the study is entirely dependent on the quality of your response. You are, therefore, kindly requested to give your frank response. At this juncture, the researcher would like to extend his gratitude in advance for your sincere cooperation.

Notice:

- ***No need of writing name***
- ***Put "x" mark in the provided tables or short answer on the space provided***

Name of Institution: _____
Academic Rank: _____
Sex: _____
Faculty/Department: _____

1. How do you agree on the essence of the BPR reform in Ethiopian universities?
   - ☐ Strongly agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Indifferent
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly disagree
2. How do you rate the participation of academic staffs in the BPR reform initiative at your university?
   - ☐ Extremely low
   - ☐ Low
   - ☐ Moderate
   - ☐ High
   - ☐ Extremely high
3. In comparison to the previous system, how would you characterize the practice of governance at your university's institution level in reference to the following aspects? (the scale runs from bad (1) to very good (5))

	1 (bad)	2	3	4	5 (very good)
Participatory					
Responsiveness					
Flexibility					

4. In comparison to the previous system, how would you characterize the practice of governance at your department/school in reference to the following aspects? (the scale runs from bad (1) to very good (5))

	1 (bad)	2	3	4	5 (very good)
Participatory					
Responsiveness					
Flexibility					

5. In comparison to the situation prior to the BPR reform initiative, how do you rate the practice of the following modes of governance at your university's institution level? (the scale runs from least practiced (1) to frequently practiced (5))

	1 (least practiced)	2	3	4	5 (frequently practiced)
Collegial					
Bureaucratic					
Political					
Anarchic					

6. In comparison to the situation prior to the BPR reform initiative, in your university new system how do you rate the practice of the following modes of governance at your department/school? (the scale runs from least practiced (1) to frequently practiced (5))

	1 (least practiced)	2	3	4	5 (frequently practiced)
Collegial					
Bureaucratic					
Political					
Anarchic					

7. Compared to the previous system, how much do you think decisions regarding the following set of issues can be characterized as centralized/decentralized after the BPR reform? (The scale goes from centralized (1) to decentralized (5))

	1 (centralized)	2	3	4	5 (decentralized)
Selecting college and school level academic leaders					
Selecting new faculty					
Faculty promotion/tenure decisions					
Determining use of resources					
Approving new academic programs and courses					
Deciding on routine academic issues					

8. How do you evaluate the functioning of institutional management and decision-making processes in your university in relation to the following set of statements in comparison to the previous system? (The scale ranges from (1) disagree through (3) neutral to (5) agree).

	1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly agree)
Academic leaders have much authoritative power to influence staffs and their respective decision making academic councils in the current system than in the previous.					
Communication between the academic staffs and academic leaders is good in the existing system than in the former one					
Compared to the experience in the previous system, I am kept more informed about what is going on at this institution.					
Lack of faculty involvement is not a problem in the university's current system in comparison to the previous one					
The academic decision-making process is now more collective and collegial than it was in the previous system					
In comparison to the previous system, staffs have stronger voice in decision making process of the current system					
Staffs have adequate level of representation in governing bodies at each level in the new system than in the previous system					
The new system has more open and suitable structures for consultation and participation of academic staffs in setting					

institutional goals, plans and policy decisions					
The new system capacitates academic leaders to provide competent leadership more effectively and efficiently than the previous system					
Academic leaders are less autocratic and more collegial in the new system than the previous					

9. In comparison to the previous system, how do you see your leverage in participating and thereby influencing decisions in your university at the following hierarchical levels? (The scale runs from not at all influential (1) to very influential (5)).

	1 (not at all influential)	2	3	4	5 (very influential)
Department (School) level					
Faculty (College) level					
Institution level					

10. How do you see the status of change after BPR in your university at the following hierarchical levels?

	1 (No change at all)	2	3	4	5 (Radical Change)
Lower level - Department (School) level					
Medium level - Faculty (College) level					
Institution level					

11. If there is anything you would like to say about BPR reform in general, in your university in particular

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix F – Support Letter

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of Education
P.O. Box 1092 Blindern
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To Whom It May Concern

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Our ref.: kristi.barcus@ped.uio.no

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ASSISTANCE IN THE CONDUCTION OF FIELD-WORK

This is to confirm that **Behailu Aschalew Asmamaw, born 16.01.83,** is a second year student in the European Master programme in Higher Education at the Department of Educational Research at the University of Oslo, Norway.

In the second year our students are required to write a Master thesis of 50 to 80 pages. The field-work may incorporate interviews with educational practitioners and decision-makers, class-room observation and documentary analysis. The type of data gathered should of course be discussed with the relevant authorities. It is our hope that the work produced by the student will not only benefit him in his academic career but also be of use to the future of Ethiopia.

Behailu Achalew Asmamaw will be conducting his research in Ethiopia the months of May and June 2011. We kindly ask you to give him all possible assistance during his field-work.

Yours sincerely,

Kristi Barcus

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